

Alliance Direct Mail Advertising, Inc.

POST OFFICE BOX 679

NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10008

U.S.A.

212-899-5341

Robert J. Weisskopf
42-25 - 80th Street - 2L
Elmhurst, N.Y. 11373

January 6, 1978

Marge Ragona
44 Gartland Street
Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts 02130

Dear Marge,

As you will note, I addressed you as I was addressed in receiving the photostat of the affidavit I prepared for you to sign in front of a notary and return to me.

Attached is your letter of 10/19/76 and a copy of a letter from the office of Charles W. Walsh.

After receiving your letter, I called Perry up and was threatened. (which I reported to the 110th Precinct.....as having several heart attacks and a stroke I can not take any chances with idiots).

I went to Small Claims Court and got a summons for Perry...afterwhich I had another threatening phone call and reported it to the 110th. Perry did not show up and I won the case. Had to send \$20. to the Office of the Sheriff...then another \$20. to have them go after Walsh (that is after paying \$5.00 for the original summons). = \$45.00

If you recall, I prepared an affidavit for you to sign in front of a notary and return to me.....after not hearing from you, Warren Smith sent you the photostat of the copy I sent him,-----you would not swear to it in front of a notary as you would not lie. Therefore you just signed the copy and sent a photostat of that copy to me.

Some time ago, a person, no longer conected with M.C.C.-N.Y. told me that several of them wrote a letter and signed it as to what an irresponsible person you are.....and I am now inclined to agree with them.

I wish I could start the year off by wishing you a Happy New Year, etc. but all I can say is you owe me the \$45. I laid out and are also responsible for the return of my typewriter.

Sincerely,

Bob

Bob W.

cc: Warren Smith
Pastor - M.C.C. Boston



100

435 East 9th Street Corp.
c/o C.W. Walsh
96 East 7th Street
New York, NY 10009

Office of the Sheriff
City of New York
31 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

November 1, 1977

Ref: Acct. No. M 10008

Dear Sir,

In reply to your request concerning an income execution issued against Mr. Joe Perry, I wish to inform you that this person is no longer employed by ourselves since October 1 of this year.

Prior to that date, Mr. Perry had assumed the duties of superintendent for a building which we own, in exchange of which he received a reduction in rent but no cash remuneration.

Please excuse us for delaying the reply to your notice. We have ourselves had considerable problems with Mr. Perry. As far as we know, he is now employed as a building superintendent for 97, 99 and 101 St. Marks Place, New York, NY 10009. The owner of these buildings, and his presumed employer, is listed as

Angela Lanzilotta
15-48 217th Street
Bayside, NY 11360

Please let us know if we can be of any assistance regarding this matter.

Sincerely yours

Laurent C. Enckell

cc: Mr. Robert J. Weisskopf



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<https://archive.org/details/2174.11.06>

10/19/76

Dear Bob, Jean Dwyer - Irvine Dwyer

Received your letter last week,
but we have been so busy that
I haven't had a chance until now
to write.

677-3658

Your typewriter is with Joe Perry -
who lives in the apartment down-
stairs at 435 E. 9th where Richard
de Stefan was staying. Joe said
he would hold it until you came
for it.

We are settled here in a huge $5\frac{1}{2}$
room apartment about 20 minutes
out of downtown Boston. Things are
much less expensive - as is rent -
and we are quite comfortable.

I wanted to thank you for your
help in finding me the typewriter -
and hope Joe has it when you
go to get it.

God bless you & keep you in
his care always.

Love,
Marge & Jean



Metropolitan Community Church

2904 CONCORDIA AVENUE

TAMPA, FLORIDA 33609

+

TELEPHONE [813] 839-5939

REV. JOHN H. HOSE, B. D., M. S., PASTOR

September 14, 1976

Rev. Joseph Gilbert
Pastor
M C C Providence
P. O. Box 1462
Providence, R. I. 02901

Dear brother Joseph, and Michael, of course:

I trust that your return trip was safe and hopefully "eventful." I have heard nothing on the news about the hijacking of a Toyota vintage wagon. Therefore, I shall assume that no news is good news.

It was pleasant to have you with us, and we love you BOTH very much. Our trip was delightful, and we shared the joys of Fellowship with Atlanta, Nashville, Memphis and New Orleans churches while also enjoying places like OPRYLAND, ANTOINES, and etcetera.

Upon my return, I received the enclosed which had been charged back to my checking account as having not cleared due to insufficient funds. I wish I could tell you that I could afford to absorb it --but I cannot. Rather than send it through again, I thought I would forward it to you, and hope that Providence Mission would reissue the check which is substantiated by funds in the account. Thank you for taking care of this promptly; since this is an expensive time of year for me with Soc. Security payment due, large Insurance premium due, and auto Insurance due. Sorry for the "schlepp."

Drop me a line to let me know that you are indeed safe and well and commuting between Providence and R. I. in good health (I meant Worcester). Beginning to tire from much work, and preparation for more.

We love you and were happy to have been able to share with you for all too short a time. Keep up the good work. Ty and I both return to school Mon.--he as a student, me as a professor.

Much, much, love,

Papa

Methodist Episcopal Church

West 1st Street, New York

September 11, 1878

Dear Brother Joseph and Michael,

I am glad to hear of your return

to your home.

Rev. Joseph Abbott

Pastor

100 Broadway

N. Y. City

Providence, R. I., Sept. 11, 1878

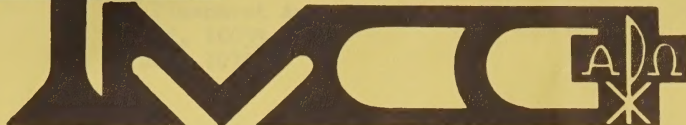
Dear Brother Joseph and Michael,

I trust that your return was a most successful one. I have heard nothing on the news about the high tide of a Toyota vintage wagon. Wherever I shall stand that no news is good news.

It was pleasant to have you with us, and we love you both very much. Our trip was delightful, and we shared the joys of fellowship with Atlanta, Louisville, and New Orleans churches, while also enjoying places like Oxyrhynchus, Alexandria, and Oxyrhynchus.

Upon my return, I received the enclosed which had been charged back to my care the account, as having not cleared one of the financial books. I wish I could tell you that I could afford to discuss it--but I cannot. Rather than send it through again, I thought I would forward it to you, and hope that Providence Mission would retain the check, which is substantiated by the in the account. Thank you for taking care of this promptly; since this is an expensive time of year for me with too. Recently my friend due, large insurance premium due, and auto insurance due, money for the school, and me a little to let me know that you are indeed and well and counting. Between Providence and R. I. in good health (I want Webster). The friends to the much work, and vacation for home.

We love you and were happy to have been able to share with you for all the time. Keep up the good work, Ty and I both return to school. I am at a student, as a professor.



699 RIALTO AVE., SAN BERNARDINO, CA 92410

May 16, 1978

To our family in Christ, Greetings in the name of
Jesus who is our salvation:

This letter is to make you aware of the fact that
Trinity Metropolitan Community Church is in a very
desperate need of your help.

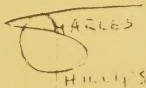
As an organization, we are at the brink of financial
collapse. We have not recieved a sufficient income
to maintain a pastor's salary nor to make payments
the building. Without an immediate show of financial
support it will be impossible to have either.

To keep our doors open, and to continue offering the
services which we provide, we must recieve \$750.00
this week.

Any effort which you can make to help your family as
we go through this crises will make a difference.

Please, if you can help now. Your prayers as well as
your moral and financial support are needed.

Sincerely, trusting in
the will of the Lord,



CHARLES
PHILLIPS

Charles Phillips,
Clerk, Board of Directors

116 Pinehurst Ave
NY, NY, 10033
28 June 1978

Reverend and dear Marge

I was very glad to write to Milwaukee suggesting that they consider you in their quest for pastoral leadership. After what I learned, that I did not know when we spoke on the 'phone, I decided against writing to either Knoxville, Tenn, or King of Peace Church in St Petersburg, Fla. Of course I will if you wish me to.

and now I have a personal favor to request of you, of a confidential nature. It is that you write a letter evaluating my work as a minister, from your perspectives as a former Exhorter of this Church, as a colleague in the North East District, and as a leader of the feminist movement in the Fellowship.

The letter should go to: Dr Alice Kitchen
MCC St Louis
PO Box 3147
St Louis, Mo, 63130

The St Louis Church, seeking a Pastor, are considering my name. And it is at their request that I ask you to write.

If for any reason you cannot, or prefer not to, write the letter, will you please let me know as soon as you can?

Thanks a lot.

Gilbert H. Lincoln

July 15, 1978

Dr. Alice Kitchen
MCC St. Louis
P.O. Box 3147
St. Louis, Missouri 63130

Dear Dr. Kitchen:

I am writing you on behalf of the Reverend Gilbert Lincoln, now pastor of the New York church. I understand that Gil has been considered for the pastorate of the St. Louis church, and that you are seeking letters in his support.

Gil Lincoln became the pastor of the New York church at a time when it had been without a pastor for six months. At that time I was an exhorter. Gil came into a difficult situation and one that did not become easier with time. That was not necessarily his doing. At all times, Gil Lincoln was a man of God, led the church well, carried an effective ministry for the Lord, and did what he was called to do -- minister to God's people. He did it well.

He also did it at a time when he was not well. For a long time he had been in intense pain, under medication, and not as strong as he might have been. Because of that, he often encouraged lay people to take the leadership of the church -- and that is not necessarily a bad thing. Gil has encouraged the diaconate and the lay leadership of the New York church to carry much of the daily load of a sizeable church, and this may be seen by some as relinquishing that leadership. For me, it is a positive value.

Gil has now undergone surgery; he is stronger than he has been in years, and is free of the pain he has carried for a very long time. As a friend of his, I would like to see him in a church where he can feel some support and some caring shown him. The New York church is a difficult church to lead. It is full of extremely strong personalities, many of them vying with each other for leadership and without caring if people are hurt along the way. Gil has tried to change that -- and for some of us he was the only one who cared and nurtured, even in the face of difficulty.

July 15, 1978

Dr. Alice Kitchen
MCB St. Louis
P.O. Box 3117
St. Louis, Missouri 63130

Dear Dr. Kitchen:

I am writing you on behalf of the Reverend Gilbert Lincoln, now pastor of the New York church. I understand that Gil has been considered for the pastorate of the St. Louis church, and that you are seeking letters in his support.

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Gil Lincoln was the Presbyterian pastor in my home neighborhood. I know the people he ministered to, and I know the regard in which he was held. I know, too, the enormous prestige he relinquished to become an M.C.C. minister -- not caring that he was giving up a great deal, he came into M.C.C. because he felt called to minister to God's gay children.

Gil is a generous and loving person. He is beautifully educated. He is a consummate teacher. He has 20 years and more experience in the pastorate. His first pastorate with M. C. C. was a trial by fire -- but he has come through.

I recommend him to you highly. This is not an easy task, and I have had to search my own soul to do so, but I would not be honest with God or myself if I did not. Without Gil, and without his making some things difficult for me, I would not be the pastor I am today. I would not have the strength and the ability I have had Gil been less strenuous in his demands on me.

You will have a pastor who has learned the hard way to lead an M.C.C. successfully. You will be getting a man who will become one of M.C.C.'s finest minds and most accomplished pastors. You will get for your pastor a dedicated servant of God -- one who has never backed down from his original call to serve God's people.

You will also be getting someone I admire tremendously -- while I often do not agree with him. And as one who has been his adversary, I recommend him to you with every bit of love and devotion to him.

Recognize that if a man's adversary recommends him to you highly, that is often greater praise than if a friend were to tell you of his good points.

Gilbert Lincoln will make you the finest pastor you could ever hope for, and I pray for both your church and for him that you choose him. He will be in the finest tradition of the church and of M.C.C.

I will be praying that you make your selection with Gil in mind, and that God will lead you to choose him. I honestly believe that you will be well served by Gil, and that he needs to be somewhere where he can begin afresh, now that he is well, to serve the Lord in a new setting.

You have my recommendation, and my prayers.

In God's love,

Rev. Marge Ragona
Pastor
Metropolitan Community Church,
Providence

Gil Lincoln was the Presbyterian pastor in my home neighborhood. I know the people he ministered to, and I know the regard in which he was held. I know, too, the enormous pressure he was ministered to become an M.C.C. minister -- not caring that he was giving up a great deal, he came into M.C.C. because he felt called to minister to God's gay children.

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You have my recommendation, and my prayers.

In God's love,

Rev. Marge Redona
Pastor
Metropolitan Community Church,
Providence

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

F. JAY DEACON, MINISTER/POST OFFICE BOX 514/HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06101



ALTERNATIVE CHURCH FOR THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY
A member of the Capitol Region Conference of Churches

July, 1978

Dear friend of MCC:

While parts of me reach out expectantly toward a rich experience of ministry and growth in Chicago, where I begin responsibilities as senior pastor August 1 at MCC's Good Shepherd Parish -- parts of me also grieve that this new era of my life requires my departure from Connecticut, and from MCC/Hartford, and from you.

A clear sense of pioneering direction, style and mission; a deepening commitment among our membership; and a broadening respect and recognition among the Hartford community all assure that MCC's ministry here in the future will be a great one. Have no doubt about it. The spiritual energies of people have begun to be released, toward the liberation and fulfillment of persons according to God's loving purpose.

But it is a time that tests the vision and values of us all. Because, at a moment when MCC's ministry must make significant advances, a serious financial deficit threatens to force retrenchment. This situation must not be permitted, and I am sure that you will not permit it. Every reader of this letter benefits in some way from MCC's ministry, and probably, each of you knows many more who benefit, too. Many of you have not shared in the expenses of our ministry for a long time. Please do so now.

The kindest farewell you can offer is this: to help lift the burden of this terrible deficit. I do not want to leave this great church in debt, not one penny. There is too much at stake, too many opportunities demanding our response. When you send your special summer gift, why not ask yourself seriously just how much it's worth to have MCC around, and how much you can afford to help--and then summon the faith to give just a little bit more! Thank you for your generosity and for your continuing interest!

Faithfully,

F. Jay Deacon

PS - I'd like to
especially invite you
to be present for our
farewell service on Sunday, July 16 at 7:30 pm!

May 4, 1978

Rev. Stan Harris
MCC Baltimore
P.O. Box 1145
Baltimore, Maryland 21203

Stan, m'love:

I have inddeed seen the new proposals and do not agree with them at all. I had told John Gill at the E. Ministers' Conf. that I disagreed with where the Fellowship was going with its requirements, and think that all this nonsense on accreditation is a bunch of malarkey.

You are quite right about the straight person having to deal with "How I can be gay and Christian." I have, right now, a young woman applying for an exhortership who is bi-sexual, but primarily straight. She is a Methodist minister, and very talented, but unused in the Meth. church -- mainly because she is a woman. We could put her to work immediately. She is not gay in the sense that she finds women attractive but has never acted on it and is in a relationship with a young disabled man. How can she deal with "How I can be gay and Christian?"

The psychological testing/analysis thing is another nitwit idea. OK if the person really needs analysis and/or should be tested because he or she acts strangely or seems to need counseling because of personal problems (or is a problem). But during a three-year exhortership one would find that sort of thing out, deal with it, and refer the person. The difficulty is that so many of our ministers don't want to actually deal with their exhorters. I flat out told my exhorter candidate where it was at and she shaped up in a hell of a hurry -- and will be an excellent minister when she finally grows up. She's only just turned 22 and has a long way to go. (not the gall above, but another one who wants to be a prison chaplain and is currently in an AA degree working toward a certificate in criminal justice.) Her background will be entirely different than that of the usual minister, but she will be a goldmine in a prison and dealing with ex-offenders -- if and only if the Fellowship recognizes her unique gift for working with the poor, the black, and the socially unacceptable, many of whom find themselves in prison.

The mainline churches we are trying so hard to be like are moribund (isn't that a nice word!!) and we are going to join them and die like them if we don't watch what we are doing. The living, breathing churches are onto the Holy Spirit and do not demand that their

preachers/ministers come full grown into the church. They license and encourage growth in the ministry, and benefit far more from a person on fire with the Holy Spirit. We damn near demand that the fire be quenched before we will consent to use the person!!

Our elitism and that of the mainline churches buggs me. We put little boys from the appropriate seminaries in charge of churches that need adults to lead them, and wonder why they both fail. -- but you have heard me say this. We encourage these boy wonders to become District Coordinators because they are so fully accredited and then the whole district goes off on a glory trip -- bound for nowhere, and certainly not with any sense of the church's potential for changing lives. Most of our "collegiates" have been through half-a-dozen churches without ever effectively pastoring one. And the bunch that transfer in in mid-life straight from pastoring a mainline church full of little old ladies of both sexes are even worse.

Don't start me off on the licensing requirements -- I, too, think they are a crock! We need to weigh each applicant carefully, balancing all of that persons unique gifts, educational preparation, spiritual stature, and ability to deal with human beings in a total wholistic fashion. Only then can we make a decision as to whether that person will be an able and capable pastor. Many are too damn intellectual to relate to people at all -- and indeed ought to be off somewhere in an ivory tower being paid to stay the hell away from people!

You may inddeed be a PRIEST -- when it comes to that point I may give up my credentials entirely rather than even consider that I could deign to attempt to mediate for anyone other than myself with God. I have enough trouble just dealing with me and God. Christ -- as my Baptist beliefs have luckily dinned into my head -- is the ONLY mediator between humanity and God -- and I wouldn't even try to be in the same league!

Seriously: Say something that makes sense about child pornography, sex with children under 15, and anonymous public sex. My conditioning as a woman and a Christian -- and my own past -- make these painful areas for me to deal with. How do men deal with them -- that is, as pastors? I need to sit down and talk with someone about these for a long, long session -- but that someone has to be a Christian -- and I can't seem to find one in this locality!

I like you, too. You make a good sounding-board, and I always expect to get something of value back. You always come through. I will be looking forward to the day when you pass this way.

We are having a Gay Gong Show, a 50/50 raffle, and the movie Gay U.S.A. in the next few months. It is coming on summer and we expect to go broke because no one -- but no one -- goes to church when they live right down the road from Provincetown (Gay USA) and can go there on Sunday. I may move the church to the beach for the summer!

Love you. Keep the faith. God bless.

In Christ,

MCC

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BALTIMORE

P.O. BOX 1145 BALTIMORE MD. 21203

April 25th 1978

Hello sweetheart,

It was so good to hear from you so soon, I'm glad you enjoyed your visit; I was truly blessed with your presence here, it was good to share, and talk and swap ideas.

I always enjoy your company so much, and as both David and I adore you the whole thing was really terrific. Rather than me be in N E District, we should disconnect Rhode Island and tow it down here to the Chesapeake Bay, wouldn't that be something? Leave the "ice bergs" to their own freezing and bathe in the warmth of the Holy Spirits fire. [Rather poetic even if I do say so myself!]

You certainly arrived in the thick of things didn't you? I'm glad you were suitably rested to deal with it. Keep up the good work, at least you are trying your darndest and that's what counts.

Dottie and Ethel have commandeered you for October when you return; they have a nice little house, and are a lovely couple, very devoted to the Lord, so I feel O.K. about you staying there as they will spoil you rotten.

Had our Rollerskating party last night, a roaring success; attendance is still in the sixties on Sundays, so all is well here. David and Delores are starting to get jittery about licensing, I hope they make it O.K. as I need them here, there is so much to be done.

Have you seen the new "Proposed requirement?" I wrote back my opinion immediately of course, I told John Gill that most of it was a load of you-know-what. "How I can be Christian and Homosexual" what if a straight person applies???? "Analysis" for Exhorters/Licensing candidates! I told him I could do a better job with a handful of emu feathers and a Kangaroo thigh bone. Honestly, if they don't discover the person is a nerd during Exhorter training, then there is something wrong. Only in America would a church turn to a Psych instead of the Holy Spirit.

What is wrong with these people? Or is it me? All the certificates in the world will not save even one soul, nor do they even remotely guarantee a persons ability to preach, teach, care for, and comfort our hurting people. Our Ministry and calling come from God, not a college. The grace of God moves through us, and (hopefully) we respond to it and move within it by the power of the Holy Spirit in the love of Christ Jesus; no seminary on earth can make this happen. Look at the apostles, the woman at the well, Mary magdalen, Martha and Mary, none of these were collegiates. Yet look how mightily they were used. Yet, by these standards they would be classed as unsuitable to preach the Gospel. OOOOH I find this so aggravating, I really do. None of this should really concern me, being ordained and all, but it does, it really does. We are going to fall into the traps we set for ourselves just as Rome, Geneva, and Canterbury have done, and no one will listen. Mark my words, I will end up being a PRIEST who is the mediator between God and humanity, by my august and privileged position; you too my dear, and we will look back and wonder how it happened so quickly. The Elite ride again.

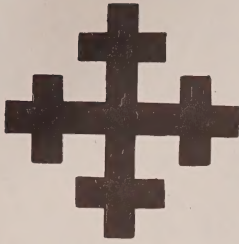
As you have gathered, I am annoyed about the requirements, heh!

It is nice to have someone to sound off to, isn't it? I value your friendship very highly, as you well know. Well my dear, time to go, take care, and rejoice in the Lord always.

In Christ's Love,

John Gill
.....
John Gill





Metropolitan Community Church of Worcester

The Rev. Shelley Hamilton, Pastor
2 Wellington Street
Worcester, MA 01610

(617) 756 - 0730

TO ALL SISTERS AND BROTHERS OF THE NORTHEAST DISTRICT :

The Metropolitan Community Church of Worcester lovingly invites you to be a part of The Installation of Reverend Shelley A. Hamilton as Pastor of MCC / Worcester. July 9, 1978 at 2:00 PM 6 Institute Rd

In attendance and singing will be MCC / New York's Special Choir directed by John Judie.

We expect the blessings and gifts to be spirit filled. We are in a process of revival and celebration over this long awaited event. We hope so very much that it will be possible for you to take part in this Union.

In Christ's Love,

*The Board of Directors,
The Congregation of
MCC / Worcester*

June 22, 1978

Rev. Shelley Hamilton
Metropolitan Community Church of Worcester
2 Wellington Street
Worcester, Mass. 01610

Dear Shelley:

Enclosed is my proposal for an Exhortership Program, which is adaptable to the individual church, an area program or a district-wide program. I think it has merit, but then I wrote it!

I am enclosing a copy for Gloria Audet.

I have two exhorters coming on to work with me, and have Connie DiCenzo who is also working toward a ministry in prison work. She is currently in an Associate in Arts program in Criminal Justice at Roger Williams College in Johnston. She has a tremendous interest in prisoners and works well with them.

That gives me three people for a class. I would be interested in having you down with Gloria to share some of the work, and in driving down to do some classes at your church. Our facilities are similar and we might be able to share some of the workload and do a better job of teaching our people. My field is Old Testament (I am a history major), and teach well. I also do fairly well on Church History since the 14th Century. I am currently majoring in Social Ethics, so that's another field I could possibly cover.

Where are your strong points -- I would imagine New Testament.

Look over the program, see how you like it and where we might share some of the teaching. Edward does not like to teach particularly, and some of his people might want to come down for individual classes. Some of them would also have skills to share, since they are well-educated and well-versed in Bible.

I feel the need to work at this, and think a slightly larger group might offer more stimulation, which is why I suggest it on an area-wide basis.

I'm appalled at what Exhorters have been through in this District, which is why I wrote the program. We need to do better by them.

June 22, 1978

Rev. Shelby Hamilton
Metropolitan Community Church of Worcester
2 Wellington Street
Worcester, Mass. 01610

Dear Shelby:

Enclosed is my proposal for an Exhorters Program, which is adaptable to the individual church, an area program or a district-wide program. I think it has merit, but then I wrote it!

I am enclosing a copy for Gloria Angel.

I have two exhorters coming on to work with me, and have Connie Picerno who is also working toward a ministry in prison work. She is currently in an Associate in Arts program in Criminal Justice at Roger Williams College in Johnston. She has a tremendous interest in prisoners and works well with them.

That gives me three people for a class. I would be interested in having you down with Gloria to share some of the work, and in driving down to do some classes at your church. Our facilities are similar and we might be able to share some of the workload and do a better job of teaching our people. My field is Old Testament (I am a history major), and teach well. I also do fairly well on Church History since the 18th Century. I am currently majoring in Social Ethics, so that's another field I could possibly cover.

Here are your strong points -- I would imagine New Testament.

Look over the program, see how you like it and where we might share some of the teaching. Edward does not like to teach particularly, and some of his people might want to come down for individual classes. Some of them would also have skills to share, since they are well-educated and well-versed in Bible.

I feel the need to work at this, and think a slightly larger group might offer more stimulation, which is why I suggest it as an area-wide basis.

I'm appalled at what Exhorters have been through in this District, which is why I wrote the program. We need to do better in this



Metropolitan Community Church

2904 CONCORDIA AVENUE

TAMPA, FLORIDA 33609



TELEPHONE (813) 839-5939

REV. JOHN H. HOSE, B. D., M. S., PASTOR

March 1, 1978

Rev. Marge Ragonna
5 Junction Street
Providence, Rhode Island

Dear Marge:

It was good to get your note, and since I'm not quite sure where you'll be arriving in Florida, I'll try to respond to your alternate needs with possibilities in regard to the extra night or nights lodging.

In re-reading your letter, I realize that you are coming by bus rather than train; so presume that the bus is coming direct to Tampa. If your bus arrives in Tampa Thur. @ 12:40 AM, we will meet you there, and make arrangements to house you in Tampa, and get you to Avon Park the next morning. If you are planning to go direct to Avon Park by Greyhound, the driver will let you out at LAKE BYRD LODGE. They will house you that extra night for \$2.00 per person. I know that several people driving down plan to go direct to Avon Park, and have made arrangements for them to be housed on Wed. night. I would appreciate knowing if you're coming to Tampa or to Avon Park. The temperature should range from 50's at night to mid-70's daytime. Give Missy a hug for me, and we look forward to seeing the 3 or you here in a few days. Please let me know WHERE you plan to arrive.

Love,

Rev. Elder John H. Hose

FAST FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

During the last decade county legislative assemblies and city councils in some 40 major American cities have thoughtfully passed anti-discrimination ordinances which among many other concerns, made it illegal to discriminate against citizens on the basis of affectional-sexual preference.

More recently however, certain conservative fundamental religionist have begun to seek public referendums on this matter; allowing the majority to vote on the civil and human rights of minorities. i.e. St. Paul, Minnisota, Witchita, Kansas, Eugene, Oregon and soon Seattle, Washington; contrary to the Constitution of the United States.

As a protest against this unconstitutional practice and in support of civil and human rights for gay persons, the Reverend Lee J. Carlton will be fasting on the portico of the United States Federal Building, 400 West Bay Street, downtown Jacksonville from six o'clock AM, May 9th - six o'clock AM, May 16th. The Reverend Carlton will receive only water during this fast and the Sacrament of Holy Communion daily at 12:30PM. The local congregation of Metropolitan Community Church will support their pastor by participating in a 24 hour a day - seven day prayer vigil, asking the Almighty God to enlighten the minds of those ~~who~~ blinded by ignorance and prejudice towards gay persons. The Reverend Carlton also calls upon the ministers of the United Methodist Church, the Lutheran Church in America, the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the United Church of Christ, the Moravian Church in America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States, to support the decisions and recommendations of their respective Conventions, General Assemblies and Conferences: that all persons are entitled to have their human and civil rights insured and that the Church and Reformed Jewish community stand for just treatment of homosexual persons in our society in regard to their civil liberties, equal rights and protection under the law. (This is not be interpreted that all these bodies have approved the gay lifestyle as compatable with their moral or theological views. It merely states that all these bodies have made statements of love and concern for homosexual persons and in support of their civil rights to some degree or another)

For additional information please contact Bill Rice at 354- 1318 or 384- 5169
Reverend Carlton will hold a press interview both at the beginning and ending of his fast and prayer vigil, at the Federal Building.

July 3, 1978

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MCC-Pittsburgh
P.O. Box 9045
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15224

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However, I would also require that ministers from other denominations applying for M.C.C. ministry also spend at least one year as members of a local M.C.C. -- active members, not closeted ones -- so that they, too, know what they are getting into, understand M.C.C. and can deal with being out front. Many of them are just "coming out" either in their own lives or in public and have many, many hassles going in their own lives which make them non-functional or even hazardous to the local church should they become its pastor as some have in this district. Obviously, not all foul up -- but enough do and need to have a full year with M.C.C. to counterbalance this.

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B. Who is going to develop these tests? Some half-baked kid at a university? Straights? Grey-flannel suited university professors? The mainline denominations? Men?

I would much rather hold with observation of the person in action. That's what the two-year period as a licensed minister should be telling us, and it's working, in that many people are licensed for a year, wash out, and are not relicensed. It works. We find the people who are unsuitable.

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Point 5 is a necessity -- provided someone reads it! District review committees need to be larger than 3 persons, however.

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Exceptions are the rule by which we live and ought to. Everything needs to be done to see that the right people -- God-chosen ones, hopefully, get in and that the ones who are not going to make it are gently but firmly eased out.

All things needsto be done decently and in order -- but not so orderly that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit gets forgotten in our quest for decency (i.e. like the mainline churches). The mainline churches are moribund in many areas, and we will just curl up and die right along with them if we try too hard to be like them. The lively church may well require more than just proper educational preparation -- and I think M.C.C. may well teach other churches a thing or two.

John A.T. Robinson in Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society speaks to a whole new kind of minister -- one who is trained to make his/her living in some field outside the church and who ministers in addition to earning a living elsewhere. He is convinced that a theological education is as adaptable as the dinosaur was, and that other forms of education may well be a better base for ministry. I agree with this, and feel that many of our people need to be educated differently than the mainline churches, since our ministry is totally different -- we may need to be more like the French worker priests, earning our livings among the people we minister to. There will be M.C.C.'s in many towns which will never be able to support a full-time minister. Must they always be served by exhorters or students, or can there be a whole new style of ministry devised.

I would hope we would think about it, study it, and develop some new forms.

You have my thinking. I hope it is valuable for your own. I enjoyed your letter. I am enclosing my correspondence with Stan Harris on this topic. And I am sending copies of this letter to Ed. Hougen and to John Gill.

I look forward to seeing you and Frank again some time. I miss you both.

Love, in Christ,

Marge

July 3, 1978

Rev. Cliff Turpin
MCC-Pittsburgh
P.O. Box 9045
Pittsburgh, Pa. 15224

Dear Cliff:

Thanks for your letter on the licensing requirements. Let me take them point by point for you, and see if I can spell out where I agree and where I disagree formally.

1. **Exhorter Candidates:** I agree that exhorter candidates should be members of a local church for at least a year. Many exhorter candidates have very little knowledge of M.C.C. when they suddenly are taken with the idea of entering the ministry. A one-year membership in M.C.C. would permit the local church to know them, know their capabilities, and know their potential for ministry. It also might limit the number of people who apply for ministry, become licensed, foul up, and are dropped from ministry after their first year.

However, I would also require that ministers from other denominations applying for M.C.C. ministry also spend at least one year as members of a local M.C.C. -- active members, not closeted ones -- so that they, too, know what they are getting into, understand M.C.C. and can deal with being out front. Many of them are just "coming out" either in their own lives or in public and have many, many hassles going in their own lives which make them non-functional or even hazardous to the local church should they become its pastor as some have in this district. Obviously, not all foul up -- but enough do and need to have a full year with M.C.C. to counterbalance this.

2. **Career and Psychological Testing:** What are they testing for? Ministry is an answer to a call from the Holy Spirit. How can you test for that? You can test potential ability to minister, and you might be able to test for psychological soundness, but there is a lot more to being a minister than being psychologically sound and a decent administrator. I do not see that testing will discover those with a gift of preaching, a gift of listening, and a gift of discernment. Testing might decrease the number of people who are totally unsuited to the ministry -- on the other hand this is often a ministry no sane person would apply for -- who in his/her right mind wants to apply for a profession in which you are guaranteed underpayment, long hours, early morning telephone calls,

the possibility of moving every year or two years, the privilege of camping out on Federal building steps for a week, and the ability preach, teach, lead parades, become a nationally-known gay activist, dodge rocks and eggs, walk a tightrope between being an object of derision and a "holy man", and maybe not know where your next meal is coming from!!! How in hell can they test for that?? And even expect that the test is going to tell who is going to be potentially good at it and who is not. If the person is truly sane they will run like a bandit away from here and not look back! It takes "fools for God", as Paul put it, to even want to do it. I'm not sure that's testable.

B. Who is going to develop these tests? Some half-baked kid at a university? Straights? Grey-flannel suited university professors? The mainline denominations? Men?

I would much rather hold with observation of the person in action. That's what the two-year period as a licensed minister should be telling us, and it's working, in that many people are licensed for a year, wash out, and are not relicensed. It works. We find the people who are unsuitable.

I am guaranteed that any intelligent person can take a test in such a way as to be able to give the tester what they want to hear. I have taken enough projective and aptitude tests to know what to answer and what not to answer. So far I have tested in the 98th and 99th percentile on the Graduate Record Exam and the National Teacher's Exam. Convince me that I could not do the same on a National Preacher's Exam!!! Gay people are slick! We have to be to survive, and if we have survived long enough, we get slick enough to fool anybody.

Testing is malarky. Besides, there are legal cases coming up now where people are proving that it is an invasion of privacy to give projective tests for professional qualification. I am not sure that we have that right, and as Christians we are discounting the work of the Holy Spirit, which might take someone who is totally unsuited and do a wonderful work with that person. Look at what God did with Moses, and David, and Paul.

Licensed Ministers 1. I agree that a licensed minister should have been either an exhorter of a local church or worship coordinator of a study group or mission for at least a year.

2. I agree with the idea that at least 2 years of college or its equivalent should be required. However, I believe that this depends upon the age and experience of the person. I would accept equivalency testing and/or credit for life experience. (College Without Walls, Campus-Free College, Empire State College, etc. can all evaluate this, and I think we need to accept this kind of evaluation. Gay people have been and are discriminated against in college admissions in many places, and many older gays have lived through this and it has taken its toll. Their educations have been interrupted and they cannot just go back and start over at 35-40-50 years of age. Others have been content to be closeted. Are we to reward those who have been in the closet and punish those who have not?)

I feel that any accredited school should be acceptable. Jay Deacon would not accept Lancaster Bible College, yet it was a degree-granting institution. Who is to say whose degree is valid and whose isn't? I would not permit simply mail-order diplomates (Universal Life Fellowship types, etc.), but any legitimate school, i.e. university, college,

seminary, Bible college (if they grant certificates, licenses, or degrees), correspondence program (if its quality is standard), or equivalency testing program should be acceptable. Those in a particular locality would be aware of the quality of the program and be able to judge. For example, the Institute for Theology at New York cannot grant degrees. Yet, it is one of the ways in which Episcopal priests are educated. It is allied with the Cathedral of St. John the Divine and provides an educational program of excellence, with instructors from General Theological Seminary primarily. General does not accept women, the Institute does. Many women began their education for the Episcopal priesthood at the Institute and then transferred to other schools, with credit given for their education at the Institute. Would we do less?

We would need to obtain a catalogue from every school in the U.S. and evaluate its courses -- and I'm damned if I don't think that many of our elitist seminaries do a worse job of preparing people for the ministry than some of our local Bible colleges, who at least are in touch with real people and their needs. I am not for elitism and acceptance purely on a basis of credentials. I know many, many "paper tigers" who are lousy preachers, indifferent ministers, and not very nice people. We can do better.

I agree that our ministers need to read, write, and speak well. Both written and oral productions need to be considered.

I think that courses in logic are great for those who dig that sort of thing. I hate it and it would be worse than a beating for me to take a course in it. However, I do agree with the rest of that paragraph.

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to be more than just one participation per week sitting in a pew. It is difficult to transfer a ministry to 45 old ladies of both sexes in the West Podunk Methodist Church to an M.C.C. ministry of 40 cantankerous dykes and faggots, all of whom are from different denominations, have not been to church for 15 years, want the church to be what it was when they were 10 years old, and don't understand our polity at all -- even if they've had it explained 19 times. A solid hazing period as an exhorter (which is what it is in most churches) is just as valuable for them as it is for any exhorter.

Exceptions are the rule by which we live and ought to. Everything needs to be done to see that the right people -- God-chosen ones, hopefully, get in and that the ones who are not going to make it are gently but firmly eased out.

All things needsto be done decently and in order -- but not so orderly that the inspiration of the Holy Spirit gets forgotten in our quest for decency (i.e. like the mainline churches). The mainline churches are moribund in many areas, and we will just curl up and die right along with them if we try too hard to be like them. The lively church may well require more than just proper educational preparation -- and I think M.C.C. may well teach other churches a thing or two.

John A.T. Robinson in Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society speaks to a whole new kind of minister -- one who is trained to make his/her living in some field outside the church and who ministers in addition to earning a living elsewhere. He is convinced that a theological education is as adaptable as the dinosaur was, and that other forms of education may well be a better base for ministry. I agree with this, and feel that many of our people need to be educated differently than the mainline churches, since our ministry is totally different -- we may need to be more like the French worker priests, earning our livings among the people we minister to. There will be M.C.C.'s in many towns which will never be able to support a full-time minister. Must they always be served by exhorters or students, or can there be a whole new style of ministry devised.

I would hope we would think about it, study it, and develop some new forms.

You have my thinking. I hope it is valuable for your own. I enjoyed your letter. I am enclosing my correspondence with Stan Harris on this topic. And I am sending copies of this letter to Ed. Hougren and to John Gill.

I look forward to seeing you and Frank again some time. I miss you both.

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METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

P.O. BOX 5178
VANCOUVER, B.C.
V6B 4B2

REVEREND LAWRENCE C. GAUER
REVEREND ROBERT S. WOLFE

Dear Marge,

I'm writing to order two dozen Chi-Rho crosses. Because they must go through Canadian customs, I would appreciate your help in making that easier and cheaper. The crosses themselves are not subject to duty and excise; but the chains are, even though they are attached. BUT, the crosses and chains should be billed as separate items, such as

24 crosses	@ — per dozen	\$ —
24 chains	@ — per dozen	\$ —

Perhaps your manufacturer can give you an idea of the difference in value between the two. It does not have to be exact, but we should not try to fool customs — they tend to get mean and will tax the whole thing if they think we're playing games. The various duties and taxes add up to a little over 50% and we'd just as soon not pay what we don't have to.

Please enclose a copy of your bill with the crosses and mail us the original. They like to compare them. I know you usually want payment in

over



Advance (as at least the church did in the past), but the billings are helpful with customs. When we get the charges we will buy U.S. funds and send a money order right away. Being international is exciting, but costly. Each cross will cost us a little over \$2.00. I realize this is going to be extra trouble for your people and yourself, but your cooperation will be appreciated.

How is it going now you have your own church? I have occasion to be reminded of Providence from time to time (my family came from there and I used to visit a great deal) and wonder how things are going with the church. And now when I think of that, I am confident that things are going well and are in good hands. The whole credentialing thing of a couple of years ago - and the way you handled it - left me with one hell of a lot of respect for you and for your ministry.

Numerously things go slowly here - but well. Larry and I see changes - major changes - going on with the cash group we've got. And we know that they are going to become the basis of a good sized, strong church. If only we can keep our anxieties and our mentalities from getting in the way.

In Christ's name both Larry and I greet and embrace you

Bob.

August 29, 1978

Rev. Robert S. Wolfe
Metropolitan Community Church of Vancouver
P.O. Box 5178
Vancouver, B.C.
V6B 4B2

Dear Bob:

Thanks for your order of 2 dozen Chi-Rho crosses. I'm sorry that right at this moment I am out of them. I have 2 gross on order, but the supplier is having difficulty getting a suitable chain. The chain we have been using is out of stock due to difficulty in getting stainless steel. (Doesn't that sound like I know what I'm talking about -- I don't -- that's what they tell me!) We expect to have a substitute chain very soon.

We bill the Canadian churches for \$125 for the cross and \$.25 for the chain for customs purposes. I always include a bill with the order. I don't ask for payment in advance. Most of the churches are more than decent about paying us -- they know very well that the money is important to us.

Things are going very well here. Money is always a problem, mainly because Providence has been going through a severe recession since the Navy pulled out of the area. Most of our people are factory workers -- the jewelry manufacturers, of course. We also have an enormous collection of Lesbian mothers -- 29 children in the church. Many of them are on welfare (the dole) and receive very little money. We also have a large ministry to handicapped people, through Michael Nordstrom, so the chances of our making a lot of money are almost nil. We survive. I am making more money (by about \$8.00) than any previous pastor. However our bills are all paid, we owe nothing but the huge bill left by Art Cazeault -- having paid off the bills left by Joe Gilbert and Steve LaFever. I don't run up bills! We run the church thriftily, paying cash for what we can afford, and doing without if we don't have the money. It has cut down enormously on our indebtedness.

We now have 41 members -- mainly women. The men come, but are mainly inactive. If we said it was sexism they would call us liars, but it is true that they feel a woman can't minister to their needs. They have never attended one church function, so I guess we can't. They come to services when they feel they want to on Sunday. A few men come regularly and attend everything we do. Apparently we minister to their needs. Sexism is a peculiar thing -- it seems we will do anything and everything we can to prove that it is necessary.

And I am as glad as I can be to have it. I did in fact
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 Metropolitan Community Church of Vancouver
 P.O. Box 5178
 Vancouver, B.C. Canada
 V6B 4B2

Here is going now you may want to see
 I have occasion to be reminded of Providence
 from time to time. I am glad to hear from you

Thank you for your order of 2 dozen Cdt-Rho crosses. I'm sorry that
 right at this moment I am out of stock. I have 2 dozen on order, but
 the supplier is having difficulty getting a suitable chain.
 The chain we have been using is out of stock due to difficulty in getting
 again an steel. (Doesn't that sound like I know what I'm talking
 about -- I don't -- that's what they tell me!) We expect to have a
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We will be sending you 2 dozen Cdt-Rho crosses for \$125 for the crosses and \$25 for
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 and attend everything we do. Apparently no minister to their needs.
 Sexism is a peculiar thing -- it seems we will do anything and everything
 we can to prove that it is necessary.

When Joe Gilbert was here the same group of men had driven almost all the women out. In this area, if there is a male minister, the church is almost all men. If there is a woman minister, the church is almost all women. It's a Catch-22 situation.

I like Providence. For some crazy reason it reminds me (in the people mainly) of New Orleans -- I guess it's the mixture of French, Italian and Spanish people. The economics remind me of N.O. also. Also the Mafia controll. It feels comfortable.

About the credentialling thing: About six months ago, just after I got this church, I began to be able to think about it without crying. I feel that that day was the lowest day in my life. I don't think I've ever told anyone before how I felt. I knew there would be problems -- I had been a controversial person for months at the N.Y. church, but I love Gil Lincoln and would not have tried to divide the church -- and didn't. I just didn't agree with his views on sexism, racism, and elitism. But I was old enough to understand that he, too, was a product of his training and environment. The personal situation between two or three of the women was another factor. Jean and I had just begun going together, and there were 3 people who got hurt in that. Not because we deliberately hurt them, but because they were not honest enough to speak their true feelings, and neither Jean nor I knew that they were deeply involved with either of us. Both of us were in "searchmode", looking for relationships, and had not been deeply involved with anyone at the church for months. Sure, my social contacts were with the church. I was there 14-16 hours a day. The only people I ever saw were from the church. N.Y. church has also been in a h66l of a turmoil for years. It didn't stop when Dee and I left, and they have just had a major upheaval with Gil planning on moving elsewhere as soon as he can. I pity whoever winds up with that church. He or she will have to be superhuman just to begin to get them working together. Anyway, the Board at New York had voted 3-3 on my licensing. District voted unanimously "for." I knew I had the respect of the other ministers in the District, and of many, many members. I had worked hard for a number of years, innovated new programs, done an emourmous amount of gay activism -- and I really believed that dedication to the Lord, to the church, and to the gay movement would vindicate me. Of course, it did not. I knew, though, that I would not quit. God had called me to full-time service some 10 years before, and I did not know where to go with it since I was gay. Finding MCC was a miracle for me. I couldn't believe that midnight meeting in Washington was the end. I almost ran home and nearly left N.Y. and MCC, but I stayed. Charlie Arehart offered me a job in Denver, but that seemed like running away. Then Ed Hougen offered me work in Boston -- Assistant to the Pastor, to circumvent the By-Laws, and I spend a hard but good year at Boston. I worked full-time at my job at N.E. Medical Center (did you know that I am also a registered nurse?) and did a lot of gay activism. Boston was good for me. It was loving and caring place to be and I needed that. It gave me a chance to be loving and caring and not have to be afraid of what the Board would do to me -- they seemed to be very, very supportive. We had a magnificent year. Right after licensing at Denver, Providence opened up.

The church here was down to 17 members, everyone was hurting, they had been through 2 pastors in 2 years and had a huge debt hanging over them. Moreover, there seemed no way to have any money come in. Everyone was unemployed, broke, and hopeless.

When the Gilbert was here the same group of men had driven almost all the women out. In this area, if there is a male minister, the church is almost all women. If there is a woman minister, the church is almost all women. It's a Catch-22 situation.

I like Providence. For some crazy reason it reminds me (in the people mainly) of New Orleans -- I guess it's the mixture of French, Italian and Spanish people. The economics remind me of N.O. also. Also the Mafia control. It feels comfortable.

About the credentialing thing: About six months ago, just after I got this church, I began to be able to think about it without crying. I feel that that day was the lowest day in my life. I don't think I've ever told anyone before how I felt. I knew there would be problems -- I had been a controversial person for months at the N.Y. church, but I love all Lincoln and would not have tried to divide the church -- and didn't. I just didn't agree with his views on racism, racism, and sexism. But I was old enough to understand that he, too, was a product of his training and environment. The personal situation between two of three of the women was another factor. Joan and I had just begun going together, and there were 3 people who got hurt in that. Not because we deliberately hurt them, but because they were not honest enough to speak their true feelings, and neither Joan nor I knew that they were deeply involved with either of us. Both of us were in "separations", looking for relationships, and had not been deeply involved with anyone at the church for months. Sure, my social contacts were with the church. I was there 14-16 hours a day. The only people I ever saw were from the church. N.Y. church has also been in a hole of a turmoil for years. It didn't stop when Dee and I left, and they have just had a major upheaval with all planning on moving elsewhere as soon as he can. I pity who ever winds up with that church. He or she will have to be superhuman just to begin to get them working together. Anyway, the Board at New York had voted 3-3 on my licensing. District voted unanimously "for". I knew I had the respect of the other ministers in the District, and of many, many members. I had worked hard for a number of years, launched new programs, done an enormous amount of gay activism -- and I really believed that dedication to the Lord, to the church, and to the gay movement would vindicate me. Of course, it did not. I knew, though, that I would not quit. God had called me to full-time service some 10 years before, and I did not know where to go with it since I was gay. Finding MOC was a miracle for me. I couldn't believe that midnight meeting in Washington was the end. I almost ran home and nearly left N.Y. and MOC, but I stayed. Charlie Anderson offered me a job in Denver, but that seemed like running away. Then Ed Hedges offered me work in Boston -- Assistant to the Pastor, to circumvent the By-Laws, and I spent a hard but good year at Boston. I worked full-time at my job at M.M. Medical Center (did you know that I am also a registered nurse?) and did a lot of gay activism. Boston was good for me. It was loving and caring and not have to be afraid of what the Board would do and giving place to be and I needed that. It gave me a chance to be loving and caring and not have to be afraid of what the Board would do to me -- they seemed to be very, very supportive. We had a magnificent year. Right after licensing at Denver, Providence opened up.

The church here was down to 17 members, everyone was leaving, they had been through 2 pastors in 2 years and had a huge debt hanging over them. However, there seemed no way to have any money come in. Everyone was unemployed, broke, and hopeless.

I had been poor all my life, but managed to put myself through both nursing school and a major university while I raised 3 kids. I figured I had to have some skills they could use.

We have been taking in about \$125-140 a week -- which is a major miracle. I am adjusting well to Providence, and they to me. I am the Southern Baptist pastor of a Catholic church! 85% of my members are ex-Catholics. I am an Evangelical. We don't always understand each other -- like what do I know from how many candles belong on the altar -- and do I even bother to make sure they are lit? My church members will send up smoke signals from the pews, lighting matches, etc. to call my attention to the fact that the candles aren't lit. So light them, I say, and we go on. They are beginning to understand "salvation by grace," and I am beginning to understand which piece of finery to wear when. We get along!

I have been appointed Chaplain at R.I. School of Design, and am adjunct faculty at R.I. College -- I teach a course in Remedial Reading for disadvantaged students. (It was my field when I was teaching in New Orleans.) My closest professional colleague in town is the Executive Minister of the R.I. Council of Churches, Paul Gillespie, who just happens to be from the same So. Baptist Church in New Orleans -- who says the Lord doesn't have a hand in our lives! He preaches for us, prays for us, and even sends us money!

We are applying for re-Chartering (having relinquished our Charter nearly three years ago) in October. District says we have to have \$160.00 a week coming in. We pray for miracles, and run flea markets, raffles and are now planning a gay film series. We took in \$1900 over the summer, which was \$17.00 under their estimate. We are praying that enough people on the Bd. of Home Missions will figure that's close enough. Crazy enough, it hinges on whether I will take more money from the church. I won't. They give me full housing, utilities, phone, \$30.00 a week, and a discretionary fund. I don't need any more. The hospital or the university pay me sufficient extra money if I want to earn it. Sometimes I need to and go work for a month or so. Sometimes I just want to pastor this church. The Lord provides.

Jean and I separated when I came to Providence. She was not ready to make the move here, and we grew more distant over the months. I have a wonderful new lover, Ginny Hill, who is from here, is a social worker, and who supports me in my work as pastor. She is loving and caring, and permits me to lean a little. She also is employed, and brings in a little extra money to the household. We are enormously comfortable in a big old house which houses us, my children, the church office, the counseling center, and rooms in which we have meetings, etc. Who needs any more?

I didn't expect to tell you the story of my life when I sat down to write this, but your little note touched me, and I wanted to share something of the last two years with you.

Thanks for your support.

By the way, I have a dear gay friend in Vancouver, Liz Thomas, a woman in her sixties, who has been teaching at U.B.C. I wonder if she ever comes your way? She's from the South, and once was a social worker in the hills of Carolina, I think -- on muleback. A real character, but good as gold.

I had been poor all my life, but managed to put myself through both nursing school and a major university while I raised 3 kids. I figured I had to have some skills they could use.

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We are applying for re-chartering (having replenished our Charter nearly three years ago) in October. District says we have to have \$100.00 a week coming in. We pray for miracles, and run five markets, rallies and are now planning a gay film series. We took in \$1900 over the summer, which was \$17.00 under their estimate. We are praying that enough people on the Bd. of Home Missions will figure that's close enough. Graciously enough, it hinges on whether I will take more money from the church. I won't. They give me full housing, utilities, phone, \$30.00 a week, and a discretionary fund. I don't need any more. The hospital or the university pay me sufficient extra money if I want to earn it, some times I need to and go work for a month or so. Sometimes I just want to pastor this church. The Lord provides.

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Vancouver is a good-sized city, and I imagine that with the universities, etc. that you have a fair-sized gay community. I have discovered that the break-even point for an MCC is 60 members. After that, you have no trouble staying alive. Before that, it's touch-and-go. But it takes 30-40 in a core group to start bringing in the other 20. The core group is easy to get, hard to keep. After that it's clear sailing, if you can keep 'em loved, emotionally healthy, and loving the Lord. My favorite Scripture verse this year has been, "Fear not, little flock, your Father ~~want~~ate give you the Kingdom of Heaven." We have learned to live "Providentially," with the understanding that God wants us to succeed. And we move in that faith. I recommend it.

My love to you and Larry. Stay well. Keep busy. God's blessings on you both.

In Christ,

Marge Ragona

P.S. As soon as we get chains, you'll get crosses!

Vancouver is a good-sized city, and I imagine that with the universities, etc. that you have a fair-sized gay community. I have discovered that the present-day point for an MSC is 60 members. After that, you have no trouble staying alive. Before that, it's touch-and-go. But it's 60. The core group is 30-40 in a core group to start with in the other 30. After that it's clear sailing, if you can keep 'em loved, emotionally healthy, and loving the Lord. My favorite Scripture verse this year has been, "Fear not, little flock, your Father who is in heaven will take care of you." We have learned to live "Provisionally," with the understanding that God wants us to succeed. And we move in that faith. I recommend it.

My love to you and Larry. Stay well. Keep busy. God's blessings on you both.

In Christ,

Marge Hagons

P.S. As soon as we get chains, you'll get unchained!

August 25, 1978

Rev. Elder James Sandmire
Treasurer
Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan
Community Churches
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard
Los Angeles, Calif. 90029

Dear Rev. Sandmire:

Last March, I was asked by Rev. Dee Jackson to represent U.F.M.C.C. at the National Council of Churches Commission on Women in Ministry Conference at Marriottsville, Maryland. Apparently Dee was unable to attend, had asked Rev. Shelly Hamilton -- also unable to attend, and finally got down to me. I wanted to attend and did.

It is my understanding that this meeting is paid for by the Fellowship and that expenses are reimbursable. Therefore, I am enclosing the voucher from COWIM and my train ticket. The ticket is only one way, since friends from Providence met me in Baltimore and we drove home.

The money was originally borrowed from the Northeast District, since neither I nor Providence had the money to lay out. I have not submitted this, hoping that either Providence or I would have the money to return to the District personally, and the Fellowship would not have to pay it. It has not turned out that way and the District now would like to have the money repaid.

I regret having to ask the Fellowship to pay this, but Dee tells me it is legitimate for me to do so.

Please make the check payable to the Northeast District - U.F.M.C.C.
Thanks.

In Christ,

Rev. Marge Ragona

mfr



REVEREND ROBERT S. WOLFE

November 17, 1978

Dear Marge,

Enclosed is a cheque for the last order of crosses including postage. Our treasurer went ahead and calculated the exchange into the cheque, so remember that these are Canadian funds. As long as your bank knows that, there should be no problem. It would have been do much easier to have sent you a money order or even our cheque for U.S. funds, in which case we would have calculated the exchange with our bank. But, o, the attraction of being an international financier.

Anyway, the crosses have been going very well and we would like to order 24 of them. Hopefully' as things go on and we get a little more stable we can figure on getting in a stock of them and not putting your people to all the work so often.

I often think back to your letter in response to our original order. That church has a history of problems right from the outset and I am sure that you've had to really work to accomplish even a little. But it sounds like things are on the move. As for where you came from originally, I'm sure that church is going to have to go through a lot of headache and heartache for a long time. You know, Marge, I am convinced that we start all the churches according to our time schedule, maybe even for the wrong reasons, in the Lord's terms. And once they're set up, they just sit there and stew waiting on the Lord to strike the right spark. And that period of waiting is troublesome and difficult, but sooner or later, the Lord

brings the right person and right group together
and things happen. Something has told me right
along tht you are one of those right persons.
Now maybe Providence is the right group. And if
not, hang in, you will meet that group before
too long.

All for right now. Happy Thanksgiving to you
and all your congregation.

Love

Bob,

July 13, 1978

Dear Rev. Gilbert,

My name is Warren Lancaster and as you can tell from my return address, I live in Oklahoma. I got your name and address from a pull out section of the December, 1977 issue of "Man's Way" magazine, called "Exploring". It had a listing of all the Metropolitan Community Churches throughout the country and since my lover and I are planning on moving up to Rhode Island in the future, I was wondering if you could give us some information on the steps a couple must take, before you will perform their Holy Union.

My lover and I have been together for close to two years now and we've decided that we want to be married. The reason we plan to move to Rhode Island, is because my lover is originally from Providence and since he has quite a bit of friends there, he has talked me into moving up there. I've told him that I'd live wherever he wanted and he wants to live up in Providence.

I know that if we were to have a Holy Union here in Ok., we'd have to attend two counseling sessions with the minister of our MCC as a couple, then one solo session with the minister. I was wondering if you

require any counseling sessions with the couple and what else you require of them.

I guess I should tell you, Rev. Gilbert, Joey (my lover) isn't the world's most religious man. It was his ideas get married, after I dropped a few subtle hints. He has said that if we "tie the knot," he doesn't want a church wedding. He doesn't have any objections to a minister performing the ceremony, just as long as it isn't held in a church.

I honestly can't blame Joey for not wanting a church wedding, since his parents were very religious people and he attended church services most of the week while he was living at home. I have to confess that I also fall into the category as Joey, as far as religion is concerned. My parents had the same attitude towards religion as Joey's and as a result, I've also gone soft on religion. I attend church, even now, but only maybe once or twice a month, whereas while I was growing up, it was Sundays only and all night services; I never missed a service. This could all be attributed to my parents, and it went on until just recently, I've told my folks how I feel about them

religion and rather than start an argument about it, they have decided to let me handle it in my own way.

Since the closest MCC from Thomas, is in OK. City, which is almost 100 miles away, I rarely get to attend Church, except maybe twice a month if I'm lucky. I'm hoping that once Joey and I get up to Providence, and have gotten married, we can forget all of our past experiences with religion and perhaps become members of your congregation.

Yours very truly,

Warner Lancaster

PS Just for the record, I was raised as a Methodist and Joey was raised as a Baptist.

Joey is 34 and I'm 26

July 23, 1978

Dear Rev. Marjorie Ragona

In yet another effort to encourage fellowship between members and friends of the various congregations of the U.F.M.C.C., you and your congregation are cordially invited to attend the MANED* Midsummer Picnic.

Hosted by M.C.C. of Christ the Liberator (Princeton, N.J.), the picnic will be held on August 12, 1978 on the New Jersey side of Washington's Crossing State Park. We will be using the Knox Grove Picnic Area. The time will be from 11:00 AM until 8:00 PM. An end-of-day worship service is scheduled for 7:00.

Although we realize that the distance involved in traveling from your area to New Jersey is great, active interest already expressed by the Philadelphia and New York City M.C.C.'s promises to make this a memorable occasion. If you would like further information, please call us.

Yours in Christ

Nancy Radclyffe

Nancy Radclyffe, worship coordinator
(201) 567-0134

Rich Thompson

Rich Thompson, picnic committee
(609) 695-5567

*MANED (Mā nēd): Mid-Atlantic and Northeast Districts

P.S.
Children are welcome!

6th March, 1978.

Rev. Marge Ragona,
MCC Providence,
5 Junction Street,
PROVIDENCE R.I.
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

Dearest Marge,

Firstly, please accept my humble apologies for not writing sooner. The past few months have been hell in my life and I have only gotten back on top the past two weeks. Sorting through my mail, after having shifted halfway around Australia I found your letter with no reply, and usually I am more meticulous than that.

With this mail I am sending a letter to Lisa and hope that it is not too late. Although there is an eventual need for many trans-sexuals to mix with straight people, the initial acceptance from my experience, and the initial maturing, comes from and through the gay community. I am hoping that, later this year, the Fellowship will be able to publish my small guidebook entitled "Transwhat".

On a more personal level, the past months have been a real trial, as just before Christmas, the specialists diagnosed some kidney failure and breast tissue problems and felt that it would be better if I did not undergo the operation. As you can imagine, my world at that time fell apart and I asked for leave of absence as the doctors sorted out a myriad of problems, and as I sorted out the real hassles in my relationship with God, who I felt had let me down. It is only in the past two weeks that I have actually shut up and given God a chance. All I can hear is a gentle God saying "Trust Me", and you know Marge, it is sometimes so difficult to trust and believe for one's own healing, whether it be emotionally or physically. God keeps saying "I did not call you only to drop you", and I know that I am receiving confirmation of the ministry that the Holy Spirit has placed in me. Each day God reveals new things, and yesterday the infection started coming out of my body. The doctors cannot understand it---- but then, God is greater. Next week I am to fly to Melbourne to see about the operation.

I too wish that sometimes I was closer than I am. There is so much to do, and with being chairperson on the Transcare/Transgender Task Force, I am sometimes utterly frustrated with the distances and time lapses involved. As so much work has been done here in this District, maybe the ultimate is for me to be in the States. It certainly seems so at this time, however I am still to go under the operation next month God willing, and need to be in the perfect will of God. But who knows later this year. Well I had better close. It was good hearing from you. Once again, please accept my apologies. God continue to bless you in your ministry-- I certainly enjoyed "There's Something Wrong With You."

In Christ's love,

Renee
(Renee P.W. Hein.)

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REV. MARGE RAGONA,

MCC-PROVIDENCE R.I.

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

COUNTRY OF DESTINATION

SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS

Rev. R.P. Hein,

MCC Adelaide,

12-14 Eden Street,

Adelaide AUSTRALIA 5000.

POSTCODE

MAXIMUM
IF ANYTHING
THIS FORM MUST BE

August 28, 1978

Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey
1050 S. Hill Street
Los Angeles, Calif. 90015

Dear Jeri:

Somewhere hidden in you is a Jewish mother! Never since I left New York have I heard such a plea as you sent out to the churches. Mother, indeed!

I wish we could be represented at the 10th anniversary, but finances (this being Providence) will not permit. We're lucky if the church can provide busfare to downtown! (Well, it's really not that bad -- but bad enough that even Troy himself could not wring more than \$125 from them!)

If I can find someone in the church solvent enough to own a camera (don't think I'm kidding!) I will have some pictures taken and send them along. We are 5 years old this month -- does that seem possible -- and wish you and L.A. all our best for the next 10 years.

I meant to write before this and congratulate you on becoming the pastor of L.A. That's a plum for you personally, and one for women in general. Bless you for your stamina and for being who you are!

We are busy putting aside money to be used for General Conference next summer. Please understand that that has priority, and while I wish I could be there in October, it doesn't seem practical.

You have our love and our thanksgiving for being the church that started all this, and makes possible our being part of God's family in a very real way. Accept our love and this tiny offering.

In Christ's name,

Marge Ragona

mfr

Personal note: If you hear of a church south or southwest that is looking for a pastor and would be happy with a Southern Baptist reared feminist dyke (who's a little crazy but who loves the Lord), would you send my name along, to them, and theirs to me. My old bones long to head for warmer climes. N.E. winters are getting to me.

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Metropolitan Community Church

1050 South Hill Street • Los Angeles, California 90015 • (213) 748-0121

Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey
Pastor

July 16, 1978

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The founding Church of the Fellowship will be celebrating its 10th Anniversary this year. We feel that it is most appropriate and important that each of our Churches be included in this celebration, since it is from this Church and God's vision that each of us has come into being.

We are hoping that each Church be represented with pictures and Church biographical information. We would appreciate your sending us pictures and required information as soon as possible to be made into a large pictorial display.

It is our prayer that as many of you as possible will provide transportation for your Pastor to be with us as your representative during these 5 days of celebration. (10/4/78-10/8/78)

Because He Lives,

Jeri Ann Harvey
Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey
Pastor

JAH:jb

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO, ILL.

1911

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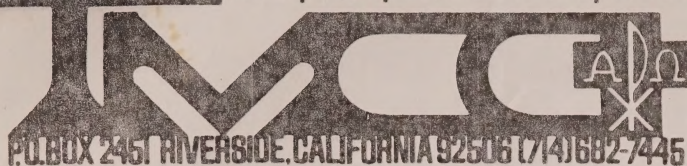
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CHICAGO, ILL.

1911

trinity metropolitan community church



699 Rialto Avenue
San Bernardino, Ca., 92410

Tel: (714) 824-1337

The Rev. KEITH D. DAVIS, D.D.+
Interim Pastor

PASTORAL LETTER - JUNE, 1978

Dear MEMBERS & FRIENDS of TRINITY MCC - Greetings in God's Creative Love!

+ Psalms 115:1- reads: "NOT UNTO US, O LORD, NOT UNTO US, BUT UNTO THY NAME GIVE GLORY, FOR THY MERCY, AND FOR THY TRUTH'S SAKE." Also, vs. 11-13 : "YE THAT FEAR THE LORD, TRUST IN THE LORD: GOD IS THEIR HELP AND THEIR SHIELD. THE LORD HATH BEEN MINDFUL OF US: GOD WILL BLESS US; GOD WILL BLESS THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL; GOD WILL BLESS THE HOUSE OF ARRON. GOD WILL BLESS THEM THAT FEAR THE LORD, BOTH SMALL AND GREAT." Amen.

+ MANY GOOD THINGS are happening lately at TRINITY MCC and we hope you're aware of them. Attendance is increasing with both MEMBERS and New People (up to 60 recently); offerings on Sundays aren't yet what they should (need) to be on a regular basis but we're well aware of the sacrifices some of you are making to provide the needed funds for the ONGOING Ministry of TRINITY MCC and we are all most grateful.

+ SPECIAL OFFERINGS in person and by mail are helping us get over the rough spot the church was in and your love offerings, small and great, are what makes our Ministry possible. You should know and realize the minimum income needed for our church is some \$350.00 to \$400.00 weekly so we do need a CORE OF CONSISTANT PROVIDER'S for the LORD'S HOUSE and MINISTRY here in the San Bernardino-Riverside areas.

+ WE'RE PLANNING pot-luck suppers (marvelous food and fellowship); a rummage sale (your re-saleable items appreciated) and other good events planned (Gong show, etc.). Our TUESDAY NIGHT RAP SESSIONS (7:30 p.m.) are really something else! If you want to really probe meaningful relationships (men and women learning to live and to share together as a valid church-family) you should attend. Our THURSDAY NIGHT BIBLE CLASS & AGAPE (Communion) Service (7:30 p.m.) is a time of midweek learning and rejoicing. Do try to take advantage of these opportunities to learn more about the Lord's Kingdom and our involvement in God's Divine Unfolding Plan. WE ALSO URGE THE DONATION OF CANNED FOODS OF ALL KINDS AS BOTH GAY AND NON-GAY PEOPLE ARE ASKING FOR TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE. CHILDREN'S CLOTHING ALSO REQUESTED, IF POSSIBLE. HELP US IF YOU CAN, PLEASE.

+ NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS are being received and if you'd like your form and UFMCC By-Laws please ask for them. They will be processed by the Pastor and the Board of Directors as soon as possible. The procedure is to present the application to the Pastor; meet with the Pastor (interview-classes) and then with the Board of Directors at one of their announced meetings. Upon being accepted, you then become a "MEMBER CANDIDATE" and ninety (90) days after approval from the Board, and agreeable to all concerned, you then become a "VOTING MEMBER." At some later date you will be introduced to the Congregation as a New Member of the Church-Family. Otherwise, if for some reason, you are not accepted at this time, you may apply again at a later date. Pray about it, please. The future growth of this church could depend upon your active involvement. Active Voting Members are also asked to fill out the new form as well, for up-to-date records. Former Members asking for re-instatement are also encouraged to fill out the form and meet with the Pastor and Board of Directors.

+ PEOPLE ARE COMMENTING on the "vibrant spirituality" of TRINITY MCC and the worship services are especially blessed with the Spirit Anointed preaching, and the precious Holy Communion Service. We have an organist now, for which we praise the Lord! Our Pastoral Staff is available (by appointment) for counseling. ALL-IN-ALL, we feel the visitation of the Lord is with us. WON'T YOU JOIN US AS WELL...WE HOPE SO!

Peace and Love in Christ, Rev. KEITH+

Rev. Keith

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

P.O. Box 1312
Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 2M8



Telephone:
(403) ~~458-2863~~
469-1866

July 1, 1978.

Reverend Marge Ragona,
Metropolitan Community Church
of Providence,
P. O. Box 1462,
PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island,
U. S. A.
02901

Dear Marge,

Please find enclosed our money order for the sum of eighteen dollars (\$18.) for payment of the order of crosses of May 19, 1978.

I sincerely regret the delay in getting payment off to you. We have elected a new treasurer recently and the transfer did not go that smoothly. Such are Boards!

Since we sold all the crosses we ordered in only two weeks, please send us another dozen at your convenience. I will see that the payment is sent a little more promptly next time.

God bless you, Marge and have a good summer.

In Christ's love & liberation,

Dave

Encl.

Rev. David A. Gunton,
Pastor

P.S. Sorry, they made it out in your name rather than MCC. (Ds)

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH



Box 100
Edmond, Oklahoma 73119

Telephone
402-1366

July 1, 1978

Reverend Wayne Jackson,
Metropolitan Community Church
of Providence,
P.O. Box 1408,
Providence, Rhode Island,
R.I. 02901

Dear Wayne,

Please find enclosed our money order for the
sum of eighteen dollars (\$18.) for payment of the
order of orders of May 12, 1978.

I sincerely regret the delay in making payment
off to you. We have elected a new treasurer recently
and the transfer did not go that smoothly. Such are
things!

Since we said all the crosses we ordered in only
two weeks, please send us another dozen at your
convenience. I will see that the payment is sent a
little more promptly next time.

God bless you, Wayne and have a good summer.

In Christ's love & liberation,

Rev. David A. Gordon,
Pastor

Encl.

*T.C. Group, only made it out in 1978
more weeks than M.C. (2)*



Together



June
1978

MCC Baltimore

© 1978

The Quality of PRIDE...

"Christ was faithful over God's house as a son, and we are God's house if we hold fast our confidence and pride in our hope."

"PRIDE" is often a disreputable term in the Bible. I wonder why. Isn't there wholesome pride: that quality of pride that isn't arrogant but thoughtful? For instance, I'm proud of Christ. That almost sounds sacreligious, cheap, and taudry; but that is not the way I intend it. I am proud of Christ's patience, Christ's constant caring, Christ's undying faithfulness to me and my fellow human beings. I am proud of Christ's willingness to sacrifice all for me, and Christ's mastery of the grave. That kind of pride isn't objectionable, is it?

I possess another kind of pride, too. I am happy to be me. It isn't my rate of success that's earned this pride, nor my embracing of Christ's truth that prompts me either. Christ has given me individuality. Christ has poured into me a unique combination of ingredients. Admittedly, they are not all developed as they should be, and those I have cultivated have not always been used to God's glory. God made me, God gave me my parents and provided me a heritage and brought together the raw material that is me. Surely not to be proud of the product of God's handiwork is to reject myself and repudiate what I am, as well as whose I am. I won't do this.

I'm proud to be me. My worth to my employer is directly attributable to God. My worth to my family and to those I love and the community in which I serve is God's investment of life in the frame and flesh, the personality and pride that is me.

In that kind of pride is the hope the Lord has poured into our souls. In that hope I take pride.

Was not the Messiah for a long time but a hope? with that hope fulfilled, I'm proud to claim Christ as Lord. I am proud to be what others have been before me.

Adapted from an article by Philip Slusser, editor of the news letter for the MCC Church of the Resurrection, Houston. This article was printed in commemoration of National Gay Pride Week.

TOGETHER is a publication of Metropolitan Community Church of Baltimore and is published monthly. Material is original unless otherwise noted. Appearance of any person's name in Together is not an indication of that person's sexual orientation. All opinions stated are those of the writers only.

Everyone is invited to submit articles, poems, etc., for publication. Material should be submitted by the 15th of the preceding month.

EDITOR: Rev. Stan Harris

A PRIVATE Affair.....

A PLACE FOR WOMEN TO MEET,
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(Gentlemen invited with escort)

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(35-character lines)*

Call 366-1415 for further info.

TOGETHER seeks:

*To expand its coverage of
events in the local gay comm-
unity.*

*To expand its pages of
poetry and short articles.*

*Contributions are welcome
and earnestly desired.*

*Please call 366-1415 if you
would like to contribute to
any of the above material.*

Straight facts about the "Gay Church"

1. Just what -- or why -- is a "gay church"?

So far as Metropolitan Community Church (better known as MCC) is concerned, there is no such thing as a "gay church". To label a church as gay would conflict with the universal application of Christ's teachings. MCC came into being because the existing forms of Christianity insisted on being "straight" and would not make room for the needs of gay people in their midst. We exist so that we can meet the spiritual needs of gay and straight people alike. MCC is a church for all people.

2. Where did MCC come from, and where is it going?

In October of 1968 in Los Angeles, 13 people met to worship in a setting hospitable to gay persons. The church soon spread to other cities, and today there are well over 125 congregations in the United States, Canada, Australia, Great Britain, Europe, and Nigeria. The congregations are composed of people from hundreds of other denominations whose needs were not met by their former churches, as well as people who never worshipped and followed Christ before. The ecumenical nature of the church and the work it does have made it a permanent institution.

3. What does MCC believe in?

Basically, MCC believes in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as set forth in the Holy Bible. The church's doctrines are free and open enough to accommodate those from virtually the entire spectrum of Christian practice — from Mormons to Baptists, Methodists to Catholics, Pentecostals to Presbyterians. We believe in Christ and in love.

4. Doesn't the Bible condemn homosexuality?

Certain passages in the Old Testament and in the Epistles of St. Paul suggest this. The Old Testament writings also warn against eating catfish or pork and wearing cotton and wool together, while St. Paul insisted men should have short hair and women should not speak in church. Our Lord Jesus Christ never mentioned homosexuality. His message was of God's love for us and of our need to love God and each other. This message applies universally to all of God's children.

5. If I come to a service, what should I expect?

MCC's across the entire world have a variety of religious experiences. You may find a solemn and formal communion or mass, mingled with a hand-clapping Pentecostal song service. Or you may find folk music or foot-washing. The typical worship service at MCC Baltimore embraces a number of these elements, as they are all rooted in Christian tradition. Many of our new members find that those parts of the service most unfamiliar to them can become the most satisfying. The practice of using different forms of worship reflects the wide diversity of religious experience reflected in our congregation. Whatever you find in the service, you are sure to experience the warmth and satisfaction of Christian love and sharing.

6. How is the church set up, and what does it actually do?

First and foremost, the church worships. The congregation chooses a pastor, who is officially licensed by the worldwide church, to guide its spiritual growth, and a board of directors to attend to the church's physical and financial needs. The pastor is assisted by deacons (members who attend to the needy) and exhorters (ministerial trainees). Many times an exhorter or deacon may be able to offer aid or counseling when a pastor is unavailable. Any position in the church, including that of pastor, may be filled by any qualified person regardless of sex, race, nationality, or sexual orientation. Membership in the church is open to those who love God, promise to support the church, attend membership classes, and are already or intend to be baptized.

7. What's in it for me?

Everything — literally. You can find inner peace, learn to live with yourself and others, and discover a Savior who loves you as you are, despite what other churches may have told you. We offer you a place to worship God as you are, without hangups or pretensions. You may come dressed as you please, as long as you come. As with most other things, the more you put into MCC, the more you'll get out of it. We're looking forward to your first visit with us.

poetry & prose

GIVE NOW

*I would rather have a little rose
From the garden of a friend
Than to have the choicest flower
When my stay must end.*

*I would rather have one pleasant
word
In kindness said to me
Than flattery when my heart is
still
And life has ceased to be.*

*I would rather have a loving smile
From friends I know are true
Than tears shed 'round my casket
When this world I bid adieu.*

*Blossoms bring to me today
Whether pink or white or red;
I'd rather have one blossom now
Than a truckload when I'm dead.*

— Author unknown

A FABLE REVISITED

*You'll all remember, I am sure,
The contest 'twixt the wind and sun
To see which first could cause a
man
To shed his coat. You know who won.*

*The wind put forth with all its
might
But could not get the man to doff
His coat. Yet when the sun came out,
The man was warmed; the coat came
off.*

*The lesson is not hard to grasp.
The more we seek to get our way
Through bluster, bluffing, and the
like,
The less we stand to gain each day.*

*Yet let us pour out all the warmth
Of love and care within our souls
And see how quickly others come
To share our journey towards our
goals.*

*The fable also tries to show
That we can try too hard, and lose.
If we but let God set the pace,
We'll sooner reach the goals we
choose.*

— Alan "P"

THE PERFECT CHURCH

*I think that I shall never see
A church that's all it ought to be:
A church whose members never stray
Beyond the straight and narrow way;
A church that has no empty pews,
Whose preacher never has the blues;
A church whose deacons always "deak"
And none go bad, and all are meek;
Where gossips never peddle lies
Or make complaints or criticize;
Where all are always sweet and kind
And to all other's faults are blind.
Such perfect churches there may be,
But none of them are known to me.*

*Yet if we work and pray and plan,
We'll make this one the best we can.*

— Author unknown

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Welcomes you to our

SPECIAL EVENTS THIS MONTH.

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Wed. June 21: Tacos Nite (All-U-Can-Eat, \$1.75)

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669-9820

Gay Health Clinic is open...

We are pleased to report that, after some delay, the Gay Health Clinic has finally opened in the Church Center. The Clinic will diagnose and treat sexually transmitted diseases. One or two physicians, and a nurse are always present on nights the clinic is in operation.

Clinic hours are as follows:

Tuesdays 6 PM to 8 PM

Thursdays 6PM to 8 PM

The coordinator of the clinic is Bo McDonald. He may be reached at 889-8679 during the clinic hours.

SAVE THESE DATES!!

MCC Events:

SATURDAY, JUNE 3 — Our congregational picnic will be held in the Dell in Wyman Park starting at 12 Noon. Pack a picnic lunch and join the fun. All welcome!

SUNDAY, June 11 — An ecumenical worship service in celebration of Gay Pride Week will be held in our chapel at 6:45 PM.

SATURDAY, JUNE 17 — A combined strawberry festival, live jazz festival, and pot luck supper will be held at the church center starting at 8 PM. Help us welcome summer with a blast!

SUNDAY, June 25 — Our annual bus trip to New York City's Gay Pride March. This is always a big success. Call 366-1415 for more details.

GAY PRIDE WEEK EVENTS

SUNDAY, June 11 — Kickoff rally, Noon to 2 PM, Hopkins Plaza.

SUNDAY, June 11 — Service at MCC, 6:45 PM

MONDAY, June 12 — Grand opening, Gay Community Center of Balt., 8 PM, 2133 Maryland Ave. (lower level)

WEDNESDAY, June 14 — Traveling Gay History Show, at Gay Community Center, 8 PM

THURSDAY, June 15 — International Potluck Dinner, Comm.Ctr., 8 PM

SATURDAY, June 17 — Coffee House, Community Center, 9 PM

SUNDAY, June 18 — Gay Block Party, 400 block East 31st Street, Noon to 8 PM

OTHER EVENTS

WEDNESDAY, June 21 — Leonard Matlovich at PRO meeting, Memorial Episcopal Church, Bolton Hill, 8 PM (\$2 for nonmembers)

In The Local Community:

FRIDAY, June 9 — Dignity of Balt. will celebrate a special ecumenical mass at 8 PM at St. Vincent dePaul Church, Fayette & Front Sts. Rev. Harris of MCC will be the guest preacher.



JUNE — 1978

S m t w th f s

4	5	6	7	1	2	3
		Health Clinic 6-8pm	Healing Service 8 pm	Health Clinic 6-8pm Ultimate Woman 8 pm	Dignity Mass 8 pm	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Gay Pride Ecumenical Serv. G. 45pm		Health Clinic 6-8pm	Healing Service 8 pm	Health Clinic 6-8pm Ultimate Woman 8 pm		Pot Luck & Strawberry Festival 8pm
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Worship Service 6:45 pm		Health Clinic 6-8pm	Healing Service 8 pm	Health Clinic 6-8pm Ultimate Woman 8 pm		
25	26	27	28	29	30	
Gay Pride March: N.Y.		Health Clinic 6-8pm	Healing Service 8 pm	Health Clinic 6-8pm Ultimate Woman 8 pm		



METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BALTIMORE

P.O. Box 1145 Baltimore, Maryland 21203
Church Office 366-1415

May 17th 1978

Dear Marge,

Got your marvellous 'heretical' letter; and as one heretic to another, I say... Hallelujah sister! Isn't it nice to have a kindred spirit? I enjoy your conversation so very much; what you say on paper, and more enjoyable, what you don't say! However, one can hardly call our concern for the Fellowship 'heresy' nor our care for our congregations.

So you want me to 'make sense' about child pornography, sex with the early pubescent (that word always sounds slimy) teenagers, and public sex. How can make "sense" out of such a mess?

I know that in Mark 9:42 Jesus warned that anyone who treated a child despicably would fare better with a millstone around their neck and be thrown into the depths of the sea. I cannot comprehend anything more despicable than enticing a child to take part in any type of sexual activity for the sake of parasitic porno pushers who want to make a fast buck from the twisted minds of those poor grey creatures who turn on to such filthy sights. There is no excuse for such degradation of innocent pre-pubescent girls & boys. I would not have the slightest hesitation in reporting such activities to the appropriate authorities. The whole idea is quite abhorrent to me both as a Christian, and as a human being.

Adolescents on the other hand, is slightly different. Under 18 yrs old, is a kind of midway thing-part child, part adult. In one sense, the kids training should have by this time settled in and that's that. However, involving an adolescent in a heavy sexual involvement/relationship, is similar to putting her/him behind the wheel of an interstate diesel truck and telling her/him to drive to California from Maine, without a driving lesson. The adolescent usually [of course there are exceptions] is not mature enough to handle such a heavy scene, and is often confused between the excitement of the new sexual urges, and the need to run home to Mom and be coddled and petted. A Homosexual entanglement is even worse; not only does the kid have to deal with the emerging sex urge, but also has to come to grips with being "different". Unfortunately there is a certain air of 'sophistication' in being a boy accepted by men, (I speak as a male) and although this is fine, Men unfortunately aren't only playing, they're playing for keeps, and very soon the kid is swept away into a full 'marriage' thing which is rather hard to handle. The lack of discipline, as opposed to straight behaviour which does not allow a guy to grope a girl in a bar, also adds to the confusion and all these messed up irresponsible people result - carefree and careless of others, and very little sense of commitment.

The above is probably more sad than sinful, and the same can be said for public/anonymous sex. Men seem to have 2 means of sexual expression;

1. Emotional

2. Physical.

sometimes the two blend together and a relationship results, or perhaps a relationship is classed as emotional.

Physical, however is related to sexual tension or stress, and as a guy arouses very quickly, climaxes swiftly, and has (generally) a slight after effect, he can conceivably "whip it in, whip it out, and wipe it" [a good Aussie term] in a matter of minutes and walk calmly away as if nothing happened. Because of this it is very easy to involve in such things merely as a release of immediate sexual tension, and no need of emotional fulfillment or blending of hearts or soaring of spirits is necessary in this case. The main problem is of course social rather than sinful; Whatever the case, sex need not take place in front of the general public, it is none of the public's business, the sensitivities of others

should be considered. It's just plain bad manners to engage in such activities in public, and laws have been passed to protect the public, both straight and gay from such sights. These activities are nothing more than extended masturbation in many cases and there is no reason why they should take place in a library restroom or a public park. Again it is a lack of discipline and human dignity, after all, dogs get it on in the streets no matter who is watching, and we should be a little more refined than the average stray dog eh?

In all these cases of course, the Gospel clearly condemns the use of another person without care, compassion and love, so, as Ministers we should, rather than flatly going a verse to the "sinner" should try to appeal to their self dignity and their sense of self-value as a child of God. As a child of God what on earth are we doing down on our hands and knees in a public lavatory giving a total stranger a blow-job? If a little 4 year old boy happened to wander in to the lavatory to "go wee wee", imagine what effect such a sight would have on the child? If you are doing 'it' in a park, what about the poor elderly lady who may be walking her dog? why should she have to see such a thing, or what about kids who play in the park? Where is Human Dignity, our sense of a "Royal Priesthood, a Chosen Nation?" Is this our means of saying "Gay is Good?" Do we honestly and sincerely believe that if Jesus Christ were to stumble over us doing such things He would say "That's wonderful, I'm so proud of you, keep up the good work?" As for Clergy ever advocating such things....don't start me off!

Often, of course, there are psychological reasons why people engage in anonymous sex; fear of involvement, an unconscious desire to be caught (thus coming out) or just plain old frustration or whatever, but the problem remains.

Unless our people become truly purified in Christ, develop loving responsibility and a bit of discipline towards their lifestyle, there shall be no legislation, no peace, and no acceptance of the Community at large. No country will 'legalise' a community of whores, pornographers, pederasts or sexual exhibitionists, and that's all there is to it.

As a Minister, I always remember St. John Vianney [my favourite Christian - with Teresa of Avila of course.] "If the priest is Holy - the people are good,
if the priest is good - the people are fair,
if the priest is fair ???...so pray the Lord to give us Holy priests.!

So, there you have it, my own opinion of course; maybe I sound a bit unyielding, but I really feel this way. However, I am always extremely gentle in counselling with such people, as I feel Jesus would want that. If, however they reject God's love, then I let 'em have it; heh! Seriously though, I do feel very much that we must try to be as loving and gentle as we can; to do it any other way will only close the door to them, and we are perhaps their last hope. As a woman, watch your terminology; most of the guys are chauvinist and may be shocked to hear a "Lady" use explicit terms, even if they have just done so to you. Crazy world, but give it time. Of course you have to play it by ear, you'll know how to speak to each individual as the occasion arises.

Hope this has made sense, [My attitude to Pot, or any other kind of drug is equally uncomplimentary] and may be useful to you in dealing with all this. Liberation is wonderful, but not when it becomes License, and stomps on the sensitivities and rights of others.

As to Adult Pornography, well, they are old enough to decide for themselves what they want to see, and generally does not influence things one way or another.

Dist. Conf. this weekend, should be nice. Saw Gil at DC anniversary, he doesn't seem very 'happy' I guess is the word I want - dissatisfied is closer to it. I didn't have a chance to say much, so don't know what's up. A rather sad man, I'm afraid.

Why not take the Church to the beach in summer? What a lovely idea!

Well my dear, got to go,
rejoice in the Lord,

...t. Stan

P. S. ARNOLD HUTCHINGS IS FINALLY
MOVING DOWN HERE; HAS A NICE APARTMENT
AND IS ENJOYING HIS SILENCE.

MCC

Answer

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BALTIMORE

P.O. BOX 1145 BALTIMORE MD. 21203

Jan 28th 1978

Dear Marg,

Glad you liked the card; about the crosses, if you need payment in advance, let us know, and we can do that, I'm sure I can twist the Treasurers arm.

Do I detect a faint note of affluence finally coming to Providence? Stationary now, hmm? Praise the Lord! I'm so glad your Christmas raid on the bikers was so successful; if you can maintain a good rapport with them, you will find them very helpful; it took me a year back home, but after a lot of comraderie and gentle (very gentle) comments, their inherent sexism slowly began to be replaced with a more all-encompassing attitude. We installed their colors in our Sanctuary with great fanfare. Unfortunate-

ly, the two sisters who replaced me destroyed the mutual support within a few weeks, much to my and the clubs disappointment. However, I hope to establish something similar here, so will see how it goes.

You certainly have your share of children, must be your motherly nature (heh!) Can we help in any way? Please let us know.

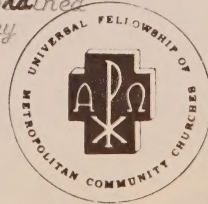
Sorry to hear about you and Jeannie, it must be difficult, however all is not lost; if the Lord wants things to continue then they shall; be encouraged, remember David and I? We met at Gen. Cong. in Washington in '76. Troy himself said 'even Rev. Harris won't be able to pull this one off'. Yet, after almost a years separation we finally managed to get to gether from the other side of the world, and, honey, Boston isn't nearly as far away as that, eh?

Being a Minister is never that easy, (that's usually when the troubles start), and Licensing is the time the Lord seems to tempt us most in many ways but it is all for the good eventually. Rejoice that the Lord is trying you like this, it is a sign that you have great potential as an 'Apostle', and it is necessary that you be strengthened for future work. Remember the 'refiner of Silver'?(Mal. 3;3) The metal is fired, hammered, tested, fired again, and although it complains and suffers, the crafter knows best, and the result is no longer a lump of rough ore, but a beautiful golden vessel fit for the Altar. Well maybe the Lord is now fashioning you like that. Could part of the 'gold' be removed to make a different vessel in Boston, well, that is also in the Crafters hands. So, take it as easy as you can, and don't worry.

Glad you like the Pastors Guide, it's partly practical, partly study material; I've applied to the Elders to write a Rites and Sacraments book, with proper directions on how to do Blessings etc. (including bikes) I'm half way through it (if the Elders don't approve, I'll scream.) so will copy off the Bike blessing for you and include it in this letter.

Sorry to hear you are still having problems with Steve's Bills as I said, just give his address to the creditors and forget it. Jay Deacon could have more sense, but perhaps a bit of chauvinism is involved. Lee Carlton did the same to the Sydney Church back home, they complained to the Elders, who eventually set things aright, (I suspect they sided with Lee rather than the Australians at first.)

Still, these things happen from time to time, I



guess, not that it is any excuse for the Minister involved.

Your son was very lucky with the accident, eh? If your younger son sells a hot top disc, my dear, you'll have to change your image, lot's of jewellery blousey makeup, and a floral-print dress; on second thought you'll probably look like a faded drag queen- stay like you are, you're more lovable that way.

Are you coming to Ministers Conference? It will be good for you to get away for a day or two, the Lord can mind the store for you, (after all it's the Lord's baby.)

Well, that's about it for now, Cheer up luv, everythings going to turn out just fine. Don't let the devil chew your ear, O .A.?

In Christ's Love, *...+ Stan...*

January 17, 1978

Rev. Jose Mojica
Metropolitan Community Church Hispana
P. O. Box 357
New York, New York 10014

Dear Jose:

The bearer of this letter, Paul Paoletti, is a member in good standing of the Metropolitan Community Church of Providence, and as such we commend him to your Christian love and guidance.

Paul has been one of our most devoted members. He was for a time a deacon-candidate. Paul has used most of the talents God gave him to help us in the church, and God has been very generous with Paul. We have often depended upon him for printing, and many related skills. Paul's background in restaurant work and as a chef have also been enormously useful to us. In short, we are losing a person who has given of himself tirelessly.

I personally commend Paul to you as a good and caring friend, one whom I will miss, and one whom this church will miss daily. We send him to you with our love, our prayer that God will enlist him in fulltime service for the church, and with the hope that one day we will see him join us as one of Christ's ministers.

Our regards to all of you at Hispana.

In Christian love,

Rev. Marge Ragona, Pastor
Metropolitan Community Church
of Providence

mfr

January 17, 1978

Rev. Jose Mojica
Metropolitan Community Church Hispanic
P. O. Box 357
New York, New York 10014

Dear Jose:

The bearer of this letter, Paul Pasolunghi, is a member in good standing of the Metropolitan Community Church of Providence, and as such we commend him to your Christian love and guidance.

Paul has been one of our most devoted members. He was for a time a deacon-candidate. Paul has used most of the talents God gave him to help us in the church, and God has been very generous with Paul. We have often depended upon him for printing, and many related skills. Paul's background in restaurant work and as a chef have also been enormously useful to us. In short, we are losing a person who has given of himself tirelessly.

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Our regards to all of you at Hispana.

In Christian love,

Rev. Marge Ragone, Pastor
Metropolitan Community Church
of Providence

mr

January 17, 1978

Rev. Gilbert Lincoln
Metropolitan Community Church - Nashville
P.O. Box 22187
Nashville, Tenn. 37202

Dear Gil:

David Giddings is a member in good standing of the Metropolitan Community Church of Providence, and as such we commend him to your Christian love and guidance.

David was a Charter Member of our church, faithful, and always to be counted on to carry out any task he undertook. His gentle and loving demeanor made everyone at this church, in turn, love him. We will miss him and hope that he will be as cherished a member to your church as he has been to ours. We pray God's blessing on him as he moves to Nashville, and pray for your relationship also.

Please notify us of his reception into your fellowship, so that we may remove him from our rolls.

In Christian love,

Rev. Marge Ragona, Pastor
Metropolitan Community Church
of Providence

mfr

January 17, 1978

Rev. Gilbert Lincoln
Metropolitan Community Church - Nashville
P.O. Box 22187
Nashville, Tenn. 37202

Dear Gil:

David Giddings is a member in good standing of the Metropolitan Community Church of Providence, and as such we commend him to your Christian love and guidance.

David was a Charter Member of our church, faithful, and always to be counted on to carry out any task he undertook. His gentle and loving demeanor made everyone at this church, in turn, love him. We will miss him and hope that he will be as overshadowed a member to your church as he has been to ours. We pray God's blessing on him as he moves to Nashville, and pray for your relationship also.

Please notify us of his reception into your fellowship, so that we may remove him from our rolls.

In Christian love,

Rev. Marko Ragone, Pastor
Metropolitan Community Church
of Providence

WTR

January 29, 1978

Rev. Elder John Hose
MCC Tampa
2904 Concordia Avenue
Tampa, Fla. 33609

Dear Papa John:

I hope you got the message in time that I left with your answering service re Georgyanne Swallow, one of our members. We got stuck with an enormous telephone bill following our attempt to help her get settled following her release from prison. We did not want your church to go through the same thing, and when she called me from Tampa asking for the church's number, I got to you (hopefully) before she could. At any rate, she's back up in this area and we are being exceedingly watchful.

Second item: As I remember, we gave you six dozen MCC crosses to take back with you, but I don't ever remember sending a bill or giving you one. I am enclosing one with this letter. If your treasurer can, we could use the money at this time. Things are OK, but tight, as it usually is in New England in the winter. The fuel bills run our expenses up, and it runs the members cash down. We've had a pretty cold winter so far, and still have two months of bad weather ahead. Eastern minister's conference ought to be in February, so we can all escape!

Membership is holding high and attendance is good. We've run about 35-45 for each service, 30-40 for our Tuesday raps, and about 10 in Bible study. We tape the study for the nurses who can't be present and they play it at the nursing home for the employees --most of whom are gay. It's been neat. Our exhorters are having their second exam -- enclosed is a copy. We have a beautiful new exhorter candidate -- Carl Cornish -- a young black man, who was headed for the Roman Catholic priesthood, but who dropped out because of his gayness. I think he will be an asset to the Fellowship in about a year and a half, when he finishes his education. We are using him well now, and I can see further use of him as time goes on.

Personal note: I am candidating for the N.Y. pulpit. They called me and asked me to do so, and, of course, it is home. I think Dee and I are the only two native New Yorkers and it matters to me that that church in my city survives. I am looking for someone to take Providence in that eventuality. It needs to be someone dedicated, able to survive if the church has financial difficulty, and willing

January 29, 1978

Rev. Elder John Rose
MOC Tampa
2901 Concordia Avenue
Tampa, Fla. 33609

Dear Papa John:

I hope you got the message in time that I left with your answering service re Georgeanna Swallow, one of our members. We got stuck with an erroneous telephone bill following our attempt to help her get settled following her release from prison. We did not want your church to go through the same thing, and when she called me from Tampa asking for the church's number, I got to you (hopefully) before she could. At any rate, she's back up in this area and we are being exceedingly watchful.

Second item: As I remember, we gave you six dozen MOC crosses to take back with you, but I don't ever remember sending a bill or giving you one. I am enclosing one with this letter. If your treasurer can, we could use the money at this time. Things are OK, but tight, as it usually is in New England in the winter. The fuel bills run our expenses up, and it runs the members cash flow. We've had a pretty cold winter so far, and still have two months of bad weather ahead. Eastern winter's conference ought to be in February, so we can all escape!

Membership is holding high and attendance is good. We've run about 32-45 for each service, 30-40 for our Tuesday rage, and about 10 in Bible study. We save the study for the nurses who can't be present and they play it at the nursing home for the employees -- most of whom are gay. It's been neat. Our experts are having their second exam -- enclosed is a copy. We have a beautiful new expert candidate -- Carl Cornish -- a young black man, who was headed for the Roman Catholic priesthood, but who dropped out because of his gayness. I think he will be an asset to the Fellowship in about a year and a half, when he finishes his education. We are using him well now, and I can see further use of him as time goes on.

Personal note: I am campaigning for the N.Y. pulpit. They called me and asked me to do so, and of course, it is home. I think I am the only two native New Yorkers and it matters to me that that church in my city survives. I am looking for someone to take Providence in that eventuality. It needs to be someone dedicated, able to survive if the church has financial difficulty, and willing

to continue educating people to their responsibilities as a church, especially within what MCC churches are doing and meeting that standard. I was wondering if Jean Bush would be interested. It is a ready-made group for a woman, since there are so many women, especially gay mothers -- and there is good male leadership in a supportive position (i.e. Carl Cornish, Phil Eberle who was brought in from N.Y., and an ex-Franciscan Rusty Coates -- none of whom are ready yet for the ministry, but all headed that way). The person needs to be bright, attractive to the straight community, and able to do a lot of speaking engagements at colleges, university campuses, church groups, etc. (many of which are paid). N.E. District is fresh out of anyone that could be enlisted. This is the problem with ministers who do not believe in the exhortership program. We do not have the fresh blood to call in when ministers move on, and no one in their right minds want to come to this district -- the weather is awful, living is difficult, finances are low, and congregations are small. We need to enlist our own people and train indigenous ministers. But the larger churches have had ministers from the mainline denominations who did not understand the value of local leadership -- most were from other areas of the country and remained here after their own education in this area. We have not had anyone to license since Shelley, Karen and I were licensed. Most gay people in this area are in a political head that precludes their being interested in the church. Religion is the oppressor and they will not support it, as far as they can see. We go out into the community, we reach a few, but it is long and hard work and the eventuality is that you get the "neediest" people -- those for whom religion offers at least some hope for a better life (if not here-at least in the hereafter). John Gaffney, our bright young activist once said that the attitude in Providence is that "as long as I can dance, I'm free." Try to combat that!

Papa John, pray for this district. This is in confidence -- strictly so. One of our churches had their board propose that the way to meet the church's \$700.00 deficit was to show porn movies in the church. I'm no square, and I can see some values to porn for really lonely and bottled up people, but that is not the way I want my church or any church in the Fellowship to have to make its money. Are we really the body of Christ, or are we kidding ourselves. Do I have to sink to that level in order to be gay -- or can I hold my head up, be a Christian, and still feel there is something better for our people?

Shelley is also candidating for N.Y., which would leave Worcester pastorless again. We are in desperate need of new blood (most of us have had ours drawn and are about bled dry.) There should be R&R available for N.E. District ministers or ~~some~~ time off for good behavior. (Take a two-year contract and if you behave you get to transfer out in 18 months!) I'm homesick, I guess. New Englanders are a dry people, and after 12 years in the South, I long for warm people and a warmer climate. I am getting old -- I am 50 this year and the ice and snow gets in my bones. My Jeanie also left for California and I'm feeling a little of that loss. She needs to grow without a mother-figure behind her, but I do miss her and will. I need to go home and touch into my roots and then see where I am headed, or maybe just settle in there for the long haul.

Be in prayer, since this is a time of many changes. I feel isolated here. Wish there was some way to combat that.

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I'm sorry we did not have enough money after paying transportation and so on to give you a handsome honorarium. Consider it owed, and if one day we have a surplus we will send a check along -- that's a debt of honor. You helped to make the conference and I was grateful for the sermon.

See you along about April. Love you.

In Christ's love,

Marge Ragona

mfr

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In Christ's love,

Marge Ragosa

January 31, 1978

Rev. Elder Carol Cureton, Clerk
Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan
Community Churches
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard #304
Los Angeles, Calif. 90029

Dear Carol:

As you are probably aware, I am candidating for the New York
pastorate. (As a matter of fact, I am meeting with their Board
tomorrow.)

Even if I were not, I would still be thinking about leaving
Providence by the end of summer. With both of these in the offing,
the church here is interested in the ministers available for call.

Would you be kind enough to send me a list of those ministers
who are available, particularly those who are on staff (i.e. not
pastoring) who would be interested in a pastorate.

Providence is a small chartered church, not wealthy, and it never
will be huge. It is active, however, and viable. Someone looking
for a beginning pastorate, where s/he could gain experience and
grow with a loving congregation could have a good opportunity here.

Thank you for all your kindness to Jean. Lord willing, some day
I'll get out there. If not, see you all in August.

In Christ,

Rev. Marge Ragona

mfr

January 31, 1978

Rev. Elder Carol Carpenter, Clerk
Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan
Community Churches
2300 Santa Monica Boulevard #304
Los Angeles, Calif. 90029

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In Christ,

Rev. Marge Rogers

mlr



5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 304, Los Angeles, California 90029 (213) 464-5100

January 3, 1979

Reverend Marge Ragona
Metropolitan Community Church
POB 1462
Providence, RI 02901

Dear Marge:

Thank you so much for writing me concerning everything that happened at the National Council of Churches Commission on Women in Ministry meeting. I'm delighted to know that you carried the banner so well for us, and I'm glad to hear of the missionary work that you're doing. I am sending a copy of your expenses to Jim Sandmire and to Herb to make sure that those are taken care of. I'm sure that those have already been given to Herb, in fact, and I'll try to stay on top of it to make sure you get your money back out of it. Okay?

I'm just delighted though that you are able to reach out to those women to talk to them. I'm sorry to hear about all the fear that's involved, and yet it doesn't surprise me at all. More and more as I travel around the country I'm meeting more women who are involved, for instance, in the evangelical movement of the Christian Church. So many of them have written million-copy bestsellers, and do you know what?--They're gay! And yet, they're frightened to death. Some of them are just now coming to terms with their homosexuality and the way they feel about themselves. And that's a healthy situation. But they've got a hard row ahead to plow, I can assure you of that. As far as your ministering to those women I know it's so important, that's the reason I'm going to make sure that you're always able, if at all possible, as long as the Board of Elders wants you to represent us, to be at those kind of meetings.

I'm delighted, too, to hear, which I've found is true, that we're ahead of so many of the denominations in the area of inclusive language and yet we have so far to go. I received a letter from Karen Ziegler in New York where she discussed with me some of her feelings on inclusive language. I told her that I'd just received a copy of the by-laws change which was sent to the by-laws committee concerning changing the word "Father" to "Creator." I told her that I can tell already that's going to meet all kinds of opposition, unless somehow there's a compromise there. I'm not sure that I agree with compromising, but I know it's going to happen. I know, too, that if you're going to have anything close to that passed at General Conference you have to do your homework now. For God's sake, I keep telling everybody don't wait and show up at General Conference and then move to change the by-laws. Because if you do, it just won't work. I've learned over and over again that if people know that it's coming up and, of course, they will because this year we're sending it out early, they will have an opportunity at that point to bring about change IF they've been educated before they get there. If they're not educated, then there are going to be real, real problems. So, I hope to God all the feminists

The Reverend Troy D. Perry, Founder

Reverend Marge Ragona

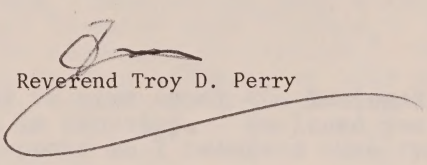
Page 2

January 3, 1979

in the Fellowship will start writing ministers they know to encourage them and to get some feedback and tell them they need their help. If they do that, then those ministers can educate their laity. That way, we may get it voted through. I do know that some are going to come with some amendments. In other words, they want to retain the word Father, for instance and they're going to amend it to be "Creator/Father" or "Creator-Father". So, everybody be prepared and ready for that. If you don't know what I'm talking about, it's the Baltimore by-laws change, contact Stan Harris and I'm sure he'll send you a copy.

Well, sister, again, I love you. Thank you for your work. Keep up the good work and I'll see you at Ministers Conference.

In Christ,



Reverend Troy D. Perry

TDP/fkz

January 29, 1978

Rev. Elder Troy Perry, Moderator
Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan
Community Churches
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard
Los Angeles, Calif. 90029

Dear Troy:

Thanks for your letter in answer to mine about the National Council of Churches Commission on Women in Ministry. Enclosed you will find xerocopies of the actual reports as I received them from COWIM.

Additionally, I attended the planning meeting for the conference at Kirkridge, Pa. which will be sponsored jointly by COWIM, NE AND MAD Women's Task Forces of MCC, and by New Ways Ministry (Sven Jannine Grammick of Dignity). This conference came about following the Gay and Christian Conference at Kirkridge last summer, when women felt that their issues were ignored and that the conference was too male-centered. Somehow the need to address the issues women have with the Christian faith needed to be addressed and the COWIM women suggested this as a possible way. The conference will deal with being Gay, Feminist and Christian and is called "Journey to Freedom." A flyer for that is also included.

I appreciate your concern about women not having done the task of educating in the area of inclusive language. Many of us have tried. Some of us have gotten burned along the way. It is a hot issue and people's feelings run high on both sides. It is not an issue which lends itself to compromise. Either one does change the language or one does not. I do not advocate female language for God, that is my compromise. I do however advocate non-gendered language for God. That is, to me, a middle ground. My ordination thesis will deal with the whole range of theological language, particularly male-centered language of the church, reasons, historical perspective, and reasons for change coming out of Liberation theology. I am also writing an article for In Unity, which should be on its way this week. Jean Gralley gave me a Zen proverb which applies. "The finger pointing at the moon is not the moon." The language we use to speak of God is not God and changing the language does nothing except leave out a few words for which there are real and viable alternatives -- father, king, prince are not necessary words. We have some equivalents. Our task force meeting at this District Conference (Feb. 2-3) will deal with this. Martha Blacklock (Episcopal Priest) gave me a suggestion for dealing with Father, Son and Holy Ghost. They use "God Unbegotten,

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Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan
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5300 Santa Monica Boulevard
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God Incarnate, and God Present With Us," in their liturgy at Mother Thunder Mission -- an Episcopal feminist group. I am tracking down what the UCC is currently using, since they also passed a national change in their language. I have been in touch with Stan Harris, and have passed on to him what I already have. I want to write a rationale for the change for him, as well.

At Providence Joe Gilbert began the change, and we have become so used to it that the old language sounds strange and terribly one-sided. If people would just give it a chance they, too, would become so accustomed to it that they would realize just how biased the other is. I really think it has to do with men's feelings about women in our society and we wouldn't want God to be one of those awful things, a woman, now would we? I find that the Episcopal church is the one most likely to hang in there and not make changes, and they are the ones making the most noise about the change in our MCC's. There was a huge article about both the changes in hymnology and the changes in references to priests, i.e. Father. What do you call a woman priest? How do you equate any term except "Mother" with "Father," and the Episcopal women do not wish to be addressed as "Mother." They are proposing dropping "Father" as a term of address for male priests and the priests are hopping mad. We, at least, don't have to deal with that hornets nest. I, for one, am usually called "Mommy" around here anyway -- especially by my exhorters, and I find it funny and it probably came out of the same kind of feeling that made the Christians begin to call their priests "Father." But times change, and old ways do not apply, and become oppressive when the situation changes.

Anyway, thanks for your advice. We will keep it in mind and we will try to get some word out to the ministers from the Task Force on Women (which I understand has been disbanded -- although now is when we need it.) Our district, at least, has not disbanded it locally, and we can do some good work, probably at this conference.

MCC Providence is interested in another By-Law change which is to make the Board of Elders elected locally, one for each district. N.E. District has been feeling very alienated -- possibly because we are geographically most separated from California, and wondering if it would be possible to have a resident elder in each district -- or at least a set time for the elders to make a state visit to each district. Your visit helped, and Papa John's at our chartering, but Nancy, who is our liaison elder has not passed this way on official business for over a year -- true she got headed off by the blizzard last year when she was on her way here, but we haven't had that kind of contact for nearly two years now. Our people don't feel that they are part of the Fellowship and it is hard to get support for Fellowship-wide beneficences like Samaritan, World Church Extension, etc. because they don't see the value in it. It's even hard to get them to support sending the pastor to General Conference because it doesn't seem really of local value to them. Think about it.

Maybe it's me, but this District seems all at 6's and 7's these days. We don't have a full cohort of ministers and churches are not being "fed." They just seem to be surviving. I am candidating for the N.Y. pastorate. That is my home city, and I feel responsible for it. I wish we had as many extra ministers as some districts do, so we could call upon one or more of them to fill in these gaps. That's what the exhortership program really provides, if it is used well.

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Again, thanks for your letter, and I'm not pushing you for answers, just keeping your input high.

By the way, there's another COWIM meeting in March at which we will be planning a consciousness-raising session for the COWIM ministers and lay leaders for October's meeting. The theme will be "Human Sexuality," and the session is being planned primarily by the Gay Issues Task Force. Being an older woman is helpful there -- I'm a lot less threatening and can speak out on sexuality from the place of also being a parent. Most of the women can relate to that. I don't know how much effect the women ministers can have on their male counterparts, but just raising our own consciousness is a first step. I am bringing a group of films -- "Holding", "Vir Amat" and "Free" (Lesbian, gay male, and heterosexual) to begin the task.

I never said thanks for your visit here, but it meant a lot to us. Bless you and your work. Stay well and God keep you.

In Christ's love,

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Marge Hagena

mlr

January 31, 1979

Rev. Clifford E. Turpin
4204 Springhill Avenue
Richmond, Va. 23225

Dear Cliff:

Good to hear from you and to know that all is going well for you. I look forward particularly to General Conference for an opportunity to see old friends. I get to see Stan Harris twice a year because there is a COWIM (Commission on Women in Ministry-National Council of Churches) meeting in Baltimore, but miss seeing the rest of you. I guess the people who were exhorters together (even in different churches) and got licensed together sort of think of themselves as a particular graduating class, and I somehow always think of you in that way -- as though we were schoolmates.

Glad to hear Richmond is growing. We have 46 on roll after 5 years, but that's mostly due to some gross mismanagement along the way. We have to give people an opportunity to get over all their feelings about MCC first and then let them grow into new feelings about this congregation, this minister, and this program. You don't have to do that, I don't think and I'm glad to hear you are growing and reaching more people. You and Frank have a lot going for you.

I have sent you 2 dozen crosses, and pay for them as you can. We have about 15 dozen out to various churches at present and get a check about once every two weeks for them. It keeps our budget healthier by about 65 or 70 dollars a month.

I am applying for ordination this year. I have my paper outlined, and have done most of the reading. It will be called either "The Raft is Not the Shore," or "The Word Made Flesh." Needless to say, it will deal with degendering liturgical language. I should have it finished by the end of February and also look forward to meeting with MQAC at Eastern Minister's Conf. A precis of the paper may be in IN UNITY soon, since I've decided Troy's right. If we want by-law changes passed we need to do some educating. I'm tired of us fighting this one at every conference. Either people have got to accept it or we've got to admit that we are a male-centered church and there's no place in it for feminist-Christian-lesbians. I'm sick of fighting it. I just don't want to hear anymore mealy-mouthedness about the historical position of the Christian faith.

January 31, 1979

Rev. Clifford E. Tumpkin
1504 Springhill Avenue
Richmond, Va. 23225

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Glad to hear Richmond is growing. We have 40 on roll after 5 years, but that's mostly due to some gross mismanagement along the way. We have to give people an opportunity to get over all their feelings about MOC first and then let them grow into new feelings about this congregation, this minister, and this program. You don't have to do that, I don't think and I'm glad to hear you are growing and reaching more people. You and Frank have a lot going for you.

I have sent you 2 dozen crosses, and pay for them as you can. We have about 15 dozen out to various churches at present and get a check about once every two weeks for them. It keeps our budget healthier by about \$2 or 30 dollars a month.

I am applying for ordination this year. I have my paper outlined, and have done most of the reading. It will be titled either "The Path is Not the Shore," or "The Word Made Flesh." Needless to say, it will deal with degenerating liturgical language. I should have it finished by the end of February and also look forward to meeting with MOC as Eastern Minister's Conf. A preview of the paper may be in IN UNITY soon, since I've decided Troy's right. It we want by-law changes passed we need to do some educating. I'm tired of us fighting this one at every conference. Either people have got to accept it or we've got to admit that we are a male-centered church and there's no place in it for feminist-Christian-Jahannas. I'm sick of fighting it. I just don't want to hear anymore waily-mouthedness about the historical position of the Christian faith.

I'd rather people just admitted that Christianity is sexist, won't change, doesn't want to change and we can go ahead with business as usual, and some of us can then seek changes through other channels. There is a feminist-Christian-Lesbian group in New York called Mother Thunder Mission. They are all Episcopals, but we are closed through our work with COWIM. I'd like to see them grow and pick up some of the women MCC can't or won't reach. If the Episcopal church can see the need, it amazes me that MCC can't. My work in this area is beginning to be recognized outside MCC. I am doing a speaking engagement on February 5th dealing with this issue, and did one at Wellesley a few months back. If I ever decide to go back to school seriously, I want to do my Master's in this area. Haven't had time or energy. I will be 50 in June and am discovering that energy is finite, and I am running out of the ability to do 10 things at once. Now I am pastoring a needy church. That's about all I can do, except to dabble in other things.

Jean Gralley left for the Coast last Saturday to join the UFMCC staff as graphic artist. They need her. I am looking toward moving out that way or maybe working my way westward beginning with Conference. I miss her -- she was both my friend and my lover and I miss all the crazy long talks and working together.

I am looking for someone to take Providence, probably by the end of Summer. Wish I knew someone mature, preferably a parent, either male or female, who could take this group over. A man would probably be good at this point, since we have validity with the women. We have only a few men (about 15) who refuse to be truly involved. The women give every last ounce of blood for the church. They always have here. The guys sit back coolly and complain if everything doesn't go well, but except for about 5 of them, they don't even try.

I guess I'm tired -- I sound out of sorts about everything, but it's been a hard year and a half and Jean's going just sort of dropped the bottom out of everything. We get very little support from our D.C. Ed just sort of sits there and grins idiotically, and the district is going down the drain. We are down to Ed, Jose, and Michael Nordstrom as male ministers. Women are Shelley, Dee, Karen Ziegler and myself. Hartford doesn't have a pastor, nor N.Y. Shelley, Don Borbe and I are candidating for N.Y. I don't really want it, but have been asked to candidate by friends there. If I get it, I will stay a year and try to straighten out the mess and then bring in someone else (hopefully from way out of this district). There is just too much old stuff around and everyone keeps getting involved in it and bringing up the ~~same~~ same old messes. About 3 brand new ministers need to be found for this district -- hopefully from way away from here, who have had nothing to do with the situation. I suspect Philly needs the same thing. Gil Lincoln is in Nashville, Roy in St. Louis, Howard Gaass in Cincinnati and Jay Deacon in Chicago. We ought to have a reciprocal trade agreement with the rest of the fellowship. We sent you four good ones, now send us four in return. All our well educated ministers seem to have gone west and we are left with inexperienced people (with the exception of Ed and Jose). Also, from where I'm looking, there is absolutely no one coming up for licensing this year. Gil and Ed did not believe in the exhorter program, so their churches did not produce anyone. Steve LaFever may be coming up from Hartford, but that's relicensing, really. I have a couple of kids working on licensing, but they won't be ready for over a year.

I'd rather people just admitted that Christianity is sexist, won't change, doesn't want to change and we can go ahead with business as usual, and some of us can then seek changes through other channels. There is a feminist-Christian-lesbian group in New York called Mother Thunder Mission. They are all Eggeopallans, but we are close through our work with GOWIM. I'd like to see them grow and pick up some of the women MCC can't or won't reach. If the Episcopal church can see the need, it amazes me that MCC can't. My work in this area is beginning to be recognized outside MCC. I am doing a speaking engagement on February 28th dealing with this issue, and did one at Wellesley a few months back. If I ever decide to go back to school seriously, I want to do my Master's in this area. Haven't had time or energy. I will be 50 in June and am discovering that energy is finite, and am running out of the ability to do 10 things at once. Now I am restoring a needy church. That's about all I can do, except to babble in other things.

Joan Grady left for the Coast last Saturday to join the UMWOC staff as Graphic artist. They need her. I am looking forward moving out that way or maybe working my way westward beginning with conference. I like her -- she was both my friend and my lover and I miss all the crazy long talks and working together.

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I have one young fellow, Carlton Cornish, who is Black and beautiful and has a lot to offer. Carl was studying for the RC priesthood, and is now an exhorter with us. I have an ex-Franciscan, Rusty Coates who ought by now to be an MCC minister and working somewhere, but he still is in a Franciscan head and doesn't want to take on ministerial responsibilities, but the Lord has hold of him and I think sooner or later will close every door except the ministry and Rusty will have to succumb. Two other men in my church are educated to the ministry -- Paul Drake was with the UCC off Canada as a religious ed. director, and a new man was a Methodist minister. We have so much and yet so little concern. I want to reach out and collar these guys and just shake them into accepting responsibility for this church in their town. (I do not do that, of course -- just want to). Meanwhile, Connie, Belle, and Barbara continue to prepare themselves and work their tails off. They are now the backbone of our Sunday School. We have between 12 and 15 kids in SS now. We have some younger children coming up, also. Our church babies are now 1 1/2 and 2 1/2 years old and I suspect will be ready for training in about 2 years. That means keeping on enlisting teachers, particularly for the younger ones.

This is sometimes not like running an MCC. It's more like running just about any church, but with a gay congregation (particularly the men), mixed with a family congregation, except that the families are all headed by a woman. Strange.

Keep in touch. Hope to see you at Eastern Ministers'. My love to Frank. Hope all goes well, and pray for you regularly.

In Christ's love,

Marge

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Keep in touch. Hope to see you at Eastern Ministers'. My love to Frank. Hope all goes well, and pray for you regularly.

In Christ's love,

Marge

REV. CLIFFORD E. TURPIN
4204 Springhill Avenue
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23225

January 8, 1979

Dear Mary,

Greetings and love come to you from M.C.C. Richmond.
It seems forever since we have seen each other and then
it has been a long time.

Everything here in Richmond is coming along just fine. We
have a large congregation after only six months. I will be conducting
a new membership class this Friday which will bring our
membership up to 37.

I pray that everything is fine in Providence? I have not heard
any news at all. So I'm going by the old saying no news is good
news.

On to the point of my writing. Would you please forward to
us 2 dozen crosses and chains? We would appreciate it if
you could send them and permit us to pay for them in no
less than 30 days. Then on our next order we should be
able to pay cash for them.

I would certainly appreciate it if you could do for
this me.

Oh yes, are you going to apply for ordination this
year? I have my paper almost done. I hope to meet with
MCAE at Ministers conference.

May God continue to Bless you and your work.

Love In Christ
Cliff



CHRIST THE KING METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

401 S.E. 22nd STREET
OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 73129
PHONE 405/235-1135
REVEREND JUDY K. DAVENPORT, PASTOR



Dear

Due to the resignation of our Pastor, Rev. Judy K. Davenport, we are now searching for a minister to fill our pulpit, which will be vacant as of February 5, 1979.

Christ the King M.C.C. has been a chartered church since June 1973. Our membership rolls total 45. We are now in the process of buying our own church building and the inside has been completely renovated. We take pride in the beautiful sanctuary our members have built. Needless to say, we are grateful to our Lord for providing us with a temple where we can worship and praise Him.

We are prepared to offer the following remuneration: (1) weekly salary of \$100.00; (2) payment of monthly premium on Pastor's Fellowship Insurance; (3) \$40.00 monthly gasoline allowance. In addition, the Pastor will be entitled to: (A) one week paid vacation after one year of service; (B) seven days sick leave with pay per year; (C) six paid holidays (Christmas Day, New Years Day, Thanksgiving Day, Memorial Day, Labor Day and July 4th.)

We are requesting that the minister maintain a minimum of 25 office hours per week, besides Sunday services, church activities, staff classes and meetings. If the minister deems it necessary to maintain a secular position, that will be permissible, as long as he/she fulfills his/her commitment to our church.

The church has its own answering service device, with a remote message pick-up unit and we also have call forwarding. We are in the process of remodeling the Pastor's office and the reception room. There's a beautiful, large backyard where we've held many successful events. Our fellowship room and snack bar generate love, friendship and socialization. Many delectable dinners have been prepared in our full-size kitchen. We own a beautiful organ and a piano, both of which adorn our sanctuary and enhance our services.

Christ the King has a five member Board of Directors and five Deacons on our Staff. We are very proud of our Deaconate because they are totally dedicated and highly competent. Musically speaking, we have been endowed with a special quartet, a seasonal choir and several very talented musicians. All of these blessings are topped off by our Music Director, who has an extensive formal background in instrumental music.

The members of our church are interested in finding a minister to: effectively occupy our pulpit, be a teacher and be our leader spiritually, administratively and socially. Furthermore, we need an "up-front" person who's not reluctant to go out into the Gay and the straight community.

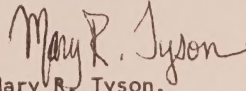
We're hoping to find a minister who will help promote and generate activity in: Bible Class, Staff Classes, home visitations, fund raising, rap groups, social gatherings, community relations, community outreach and bar ministry.

If you know of anyone who might be seeking a pulpit at this time, we would appreciate it, if you would forward this information to him/her. The interested person can reply by sending a complete resume' for the Pulpit Committee's consideration. Enclosed please find a profile of the qualities we expect and require in a Pastor.

In closing we'd like to add that we are a contract church and would expect a minimum commitment of one year from the minister. The contract is reviewed every six months. Of course the contract in its final form will reflect total mutual agreement of its terms and context, between the church and the Pastor.

May the peace of the Lord be with you as you serve Him and the Fellowship.

Love in Jesus,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary R. Tyson".

Mary R. Tyson,
Clerk, Pulpit Committee

MRT:11



Metropolitan Community Church of Portland

N.E. 24th & Broadway • Portland, Oregon 97232

281-8868

REV. DONALD C. BORBE
PASTOR

Dear Friend,

Our Fourth Annual Halloween Party is upon us and I have been asked by our planning committee to extend a special invitation to you.

The first thing you already know is that you'll be among the most interesting of company, not to say anything of the outrageous costumes and great entertainment by the Womins' Jug Band and sensational musical comedy by the BiJou Ritz. MC of the evening will be his most Imperial Majesty, The Rose Court's Emperor Tom.

There will be something for everyone (notice I said something) a "no host" bar for those into spirits, soft drinks and coffee for those into natural highs, and plenty of munchies for those into fingers and nibbling.

And if that doesn't include your favorite fantasy, then perhaps the crowded disco-music, dancing, awards, and door prizes will make a Halloween to be remembered. We'll hope to see you there but don't expect to recognize me.

Don Borbe, Pastor

DB:pc



Metropolitan Community Church of Portland

N.E. 24th & Broadway • Portland, Oregon 97232

281-8868

REV. DONALD C. BORBE
PASTOR

October 28, 1980

Dear Pastors and Worship Coordinators,

I am writing you in love and asking for your prayers and awareness about a Ron Pittman who found Portland MCC to be financial temptation. He served us in janitorial and maintenance functions and because he was employed locally as a security officer we trusted him beyond his capabilities. He is about 5' 8", age 27, raised in Brookland New York and has an outstanding need for dental work as an identifiable characteristic. Our intention of alerting you comes out of our love for all concerned. Please call or write if you need further clarification.

In Christion love,

Rev. Donald Borbe

DB:pc



METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF TALLAHASSEE

1237 NORTH ADAMS STREET, TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32303

TELEPHONE (904) 222-2582

Thursday

Dear Marge,

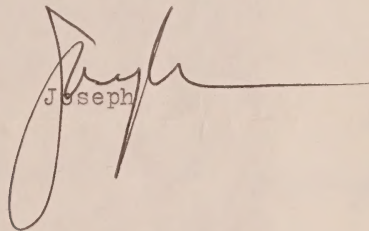
I don't know why, but you have been very much on my mind the last few days. And so, I wanted to take just a moment to tell you (remind you maybe) that I love you very much. And to tell you also that I am claiming good things for you.

When we left Canada the last I heard was that you might be going to Gil's District. Tallahassee is off the beaten track of the 'rumor-mill' so I don't know whether that has come about yet or not.

It would be good to hear from you...good stuff, bad stuff or even indifferent stuff. If you have yet to leave the west and are coming nearby and wanted to come through here for a few days we would try to make that "big news".

Please know that as long as I have a roof over my head, you have one available to you. Peace.

God is with us,


Joseph

Joseph Gilbert

Happy Birthday



Congratulations on your
BIRTHDAY
from the staff
of
THE UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP

Rev. J. W. Hasani
Manny Weil
Frank Zerilli
C. Boes
John C. Dutton
Richard O'Dell
Shania Shamoo
Loni Allen
Wale Seche
Garry & Betty

38 Bonview
San Francisco, CA
94110

Sept 9, 1981

Dear Marge,

Just a brief note to share the information I mentioned to you while I was in Boston!

The worship coordinator for Moncton, New Brunswick is Terry Amis. His address is —

RR#1 SALISBURY RD
MONCTON, N.B

CANADA EIC-8J5

phone — (506) 372-4717

Any fellowship that M.C.C.-Boston can extend would surely be appreciated by the people in Moncton. They are a small but dedicated group.

Also, if you find any information about the work in Portland, I'm sure they would appreciate knowing.

My prayers for you as you continue God's work in Boston.

Michael Marks



THE METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH

F. JAY DEACON, MINISTER/POST OFFICE BOX 514/HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06101

ALTERNATIVE CHURCH FOR THE CONNECTICUT VALLEY
A member of the Capitol Region Conference of Churches

September 4, 1976

Dear

As you know, the Northeast District credentials committee has asked me to direct a program of theological study for you. September has arrived--and if you're anything like me, the season has a way of putting you in the mood to do some mental work. So, here's some to begin with!

Let me just say first that "mental" work alone does not make a spiritual leader. We lead out of an integrated personal core that is expert and informed, but first of all spiritual.

This sort of spiritual integration seems so important that I want to begin with a few readings that do not isolate biblical studies, or theology, or historical study, or pastoral matters, or spirituality, off in a corner apart from the others--but that integrate them, I think excitingly.

Here, then, are the four books with which we'll begin:

John Yungblut, Rediscovering the Christ (New York: Seabury, 1974). \$7.95.

John Yungblut, Rediscovering Prayer (New York, Seabury, 1972). \$5.95. (optional)

William Johnston, Silent Music (New York: Perennial Library, Harper & Row, 1974). Paper, \$1.95

Walter Wink, The Bible in Human Transformation (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1973). Paper, \$2.95.

In what order should you read them? In the order in which you can get them. Try the bookstore of the theological seminary near you. Or any bookstore, especially a religious one, can order a book for you. Or borrow them from the seminary library, or get your public library to get the book for you on an "interlibrary loan." Having the book to write in or turn back to later, though, may be helpful. If local libraries and bookstores fail, I can get them here.

Then, write a response--a review of the book in which you: (1) summarize what the book discusses; (2) respond to, react to, and interact with the book; (3) indicate in what ways the book brought about change in you, or failed to do so; and (4) indicate areas where the book has whetted your appetite to know more.

In addition, in the case of Rediscovering the Christ, I'd like you to list questions the book raises for you. What in the book do you question? Feel threatened by? Enlightened by? Keep a copy for yourself and send your reports, one by one as you get them done, to the above address. Hope we can share a growing, enriching Fall!

Faithfully,

Jay

F. Jay Deacon

OFFICE: (203) 232-5110
SWITCHBOARD INFO LINE: 522-5575

241-234 Lafayette Rd.
Syracuse, N.Y. 13205
November 27, 1981

Dear Marge,

Missed you because we did not go to conference but you met Laurie our lone representative. I still think and appreciate your time spent with me in California.

We look for your prayerful support on the occasion of our anniversary and a weekend with our co-district coordinators.

Trust things are well with you and the church in Boston. The value of conferences is to keep in touch and we miss each other and the news when we can't attend.

Love,
Dick Nottingham

(315) 469-6545



UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES
SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

District Coordinator

District Treasurer

The Rev. Bob Arthur
POB 65206
Los Angeles, CA 90065
(213) 258-4911

Lois Luneburg
POB 845
Port Hueneme, CA 93041

August 13, 1981

Rev. Marge Ragona
223 Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02143

Dear Marge,

It was really good to see you at Conference last week again. I trust your trip home was good and that you are beginning to recover from Conference.

It was an especially gruelling conference for me, as on Saturday night, out of the clear blue sky, Thomas told me that it was over between us, and that he would not be coming home with me. I still have no idea what was wrong, as I had no indication of trouble up to that moment. I have had some difficult emotions to work through this week.

Enclosed is the recommendation you requested for Boston University School of Theology. I have enclosed a carbon copy (with my typos) for your district coordinator. You mentioned in your letter Steve Pieters, but the directory lists Shelley Hamilton, so, I will let you forward it to whomever you wish.

Love,

Rev. Bob Arthur
District Coordinator



UNIVERSAL FELLOWSHIP OF METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCHES
SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

District Coordinator

District Treasurer

The Rev. Bob Arthur
POB 65206
Los Angeles, CA 90065
(213) 258-4911

Lois Luneburg
POB 845
Port Hueneme, CA 93041

August 13, 1981

Boston University School of Theology
Admissions Office
745 Commonwealth Avenue
Boston, MA 02215

Dear Friends:

Please accept this as a recommendation for the Rev. Marge Ragona whom I have known for quite some time, but specifically for the last two years as one of the pastors in my jurisdiction, for whom I have been responsible.

Marge came to this district with some apprehension both on her part and on several of the clergy of this district because of her special theology. Our Fellowship is an ecumenical body which embraces only the basic historic Christian points of theology, and allows its members to hold to a great variety within that structure. Since Marge was from the east coast where the theology of the majority of the clergy is different from that of the clergy on the west coast, many were afraid of some conflict. However, her arrival proved one of the best things that has ever happened to this district. Marge is an outspoken individual, who can quite clearly state her position on matters, and as such helped to educate many of our west coast clergy in such points of theology as inclusive language, and liberation theology.

She took a struggling group of seven or eight people and built them up to over forty in a little over a year, and left them quite able to seek a new pastor and not suffer in the process. In addition she taught at our Fellowship's Seminary, Samaritan Theological Institute. In fact, she and I co-taught at least one course during her time here. She is academically sharp, and very well liked by her students.

I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Marge these last two years, and strongly recommend her as she pursues further education. She is one of the brilliant up-coming preachers of our Fellowship.

If I can be of any further help or information, please feel free to call upon me.

Sincerely,

Rev. Bob Arthur
District Coordinator

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH IN THE VALLEY

5730 Cahuenga Blvd. * North Hollywood, California 91601 * (213) 762-1133

Reverend Randall L. Cypher, Pastor

12 September 1980

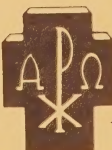
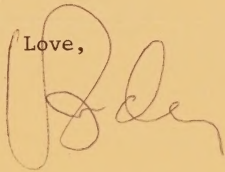
Dear Marge,

Just read your article in IN UNITY. Excellent! You have a way of communicating which truly embraces and I was moved by your experience in Washington and eagerly look forward to more sharings of your experiences there. I have been reading Boswell's long-awaited book, running into sexism as the single probable root of gay oppression yet once again. Your article only heightens that sense that our struggle is a truly common, shared struggle; that our enemy is one; that I need people like yourself on the front lines even more than ever.

I also wanted to convey a belated thank you for your participation in our recent WOMEN ON THE MOVE. You touched the hearts of some of my more stubborn women and surprised them with the depth and fullness of your faith. Thank you for being you!

While it frightens me when I realize that our efforts toward liberation are indeed regressing, that realization strengthens my own determination to continue the battle to the very end. I hope and pray your commitment will likewise increase. You are very needed -- especially in our Fellowship and even more especially in our district. I praise God for articulate, compassionate and positively angry spokespersons like you.

Love,



METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF BOSTON
131 Cambridge Street
Boston, Massachusetts 02114

July 27, 1981

Ministerial Credentials and
Affairs Committee
U.F.M.C.C.
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA. 90036

RE: Rev. George Covington

To Whom It May Concern:

I have known George Covington for a number of years, beginning with his pastorate in Florida. I have had the opportunity of knowing him better since his becoming Assistant Pastor at the Los Angeles church.

George is a mature, sensitive and warm human being. He is well-trained in the areas of counseling and Christian Education. He has the ability to relate to people easily and well, and to attend carefully to what is being presented.

More than this, however, I recognize in George Covington a deeply committed Christian, one whose paramount concern is the presentation of the Christian faith, his understanding of ministry, and the needs of human beings.

I cannot imagine in M.C.C. a minister more equipped to work in the pastorate. I have always been struck by George's pastoral way of dealing with questions, disagreements, and tasks.

George and I have found ourselves in disagreement, but there was always regard and respect for the other person present on his part.

I wholeheartedly recommend Rev. George Covington for ordination in this Fellowship. I believe that we cannot afford to not ordain a man of George's qualifications, demeanor, temperament, ideals, and Christian perspective. He adds much to us as a Fellowship, and will bring to the ordained ministry a breadth and depth which will enrich us.

In Christ's love,

Rev. Marge Ragona
Pastor
M.C.C. Boston

mfr

